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Contents for December 30th, 1923, Issue

Ironfist *A Complete Novelette* . . . . . **W. Townend** 3
Sailors—the fight on the Genoa waterfront.

The Third in a Quarrel . . . . . **William Byron Mowery** 46
Baffinland—*Nagak* wanted a champion—and got one.

The Holy Tiger . . . . . **John Eyton** 53
India—the invulnerable beast.

The Long Knives *A Five-Part Story Part I* . . . . . **Hugh Pendexter** 60
The Ohio frontier—"Mad Anthony" Wayne against the Indians.

Anomalies of Indian Rule *Old Laws* . . . . . **Frank H. Huston** 96

The Dugout Canoe . . . . . **John Scarry** 97
New Guinea—captured by Papuans.

The Education of Edgar . . . . . **E. S. Pladwell** 104
The sea—the hard-case skipper tries to break his son.

Slants on Life *Plowman and Paralytic* . . . . . **Bill Adams** 115

Standish of the Star Y *A Five-Part Story Conclusion* . . **Gordon Young** 116
Cattle country—the tracking of "*Red*" *Allister*.

Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.

(Continued on next page)

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(*Continued from preceding page*)

Smiling *Poem* . . . . . **Bill Adams** 141

Woodcraft *Frontier Days* . . . . . **Raymond S. Spears** 142

The Story of the Khalifa *An Incident in the Affairs of Mohamed Ali*
Morocco—a modern Daniel and two tigers. **George E. Holt** 143

The Slick Guy *A Complete Novelette* . . . . . **Frederick Moore** 147
South Seas—a captain faces a strange situation.

Early Commercial Monopoly in the Mississippi Valley . **Leon Rowland** 160

Gamblers' Qualifications *A Complete Novelette* . . . **Barry Scobee** 161
West—the man who made himself over.

Derelicts *Human Driftwood in Paraguay* . . . **William R. Barbour** 175

The Camp-Fire A free-to-all meeting-place for readers, writers and adventurers 176

Old Songs That Men Have Sung 182

Various Practical Services Free to Any Reader 183

Ask Adventure 184
A free question and answer service bureau of information on outdoor life and activities everywhere. Comprising sixty-two geographical sub-divisions, with special sections on Radio, Mining and Prospecting, Weapons Past and Present, Salt and Fresh Water Fishing, Tropical Forestry, Aviation and Army Matters, United States and Foreign.

Lost Trails 191

The Trail Ahead 192

Headings . . . . . **V. E. Pyles**

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VOL XLIV
NO 3

Adventure

Ironfist

A Complete Novelette

by W. TOWNEND

Author of "The Tramp," "The Trimmer," etc.

NO ONE had ever learned the true cause of the breach between father and son, not even the chief engineer, MacLeston, who more than any one on board the *Askelon* could claim the friendship of both. And MacLeston, who was a kind-hearted man with fixed ideas in his mind on doing good to others, so far as was possible for any man who followed the sea as a career, was of the opinion that he understood less about "Ironfist" after knowing him on and off for a quarter of a century than when he had first sailed with him in the far-off nineties.

Ironfist the father—Ironfist Harron, captain of the *Askelon*—a hard-faced, square-shouldered man of middle height, silent, morose and cold in his manner, invited no confidences. He had never been heard to venture an opinion, favorable or unfavorable, about his son; yet in his attitude toward him, in his smile when he listened to him talk or watched him, hate and contempt were uppermost, visible to all beholders.

On deck and in the engine room alike it was said that Ironfist could never be really happy unless he was making some one else either miserable or afraid. It was said, also, that though he was harsh even in his mildest of moods to those who served under him, to his own son his harshness resembled a kind of repressed ferocity. No sign of affection passed between them. There was no comradeship; there seemed even no trace of respect. From the moment the boy came on board as third mate the father ruled him with iron discipline.

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The son, Dickie Harron, a tall, fair lad, clean in his outlook, happy in his nature, without an enemy in the world and as popular as his father was unpopular, accepted everything, abuse, anger, indifference, injustice, in silence.

Most of the *Askelon's* officers maintained offhand that the lad was hardened by years of neglect and bad treatment. The chief engineer, however, was wiser. He could see further into his thoughts than the other could; he had more sympathy with his struggles to hide his feelings.

The mate said one evening that Dickie no longer cared, one way or another, how Ironfist behaved to him.

"Mr. Rack," said the chief, "ye're wrang! Dickie does care, mair nor ye ha'e ony conception! The auld man is wreckin' the lad's life!"

"What's at the back of it, chief?"

"God kens!"

"Speak to him them and find out!" said the mate.

"I wull," said the chief firmly. "I'm a fayther masel', Mr. Rack, as nae doot ye're aware—" the mate smiled—"an' I tell ye, it isna in human natur' that ony man shud bear sic malice to his ain kin!"

BY THE time that Dickie Harron set out on his third voyage as third mate of the *Askelon* it seemed that the rift between father and son had if possible grown wider. Ironfist had become harder and colder; the boy had lost some of his gaiety and freshness; he was quieter, more reserved. Yet, as the *Askelon* plodded slowly through heavy weather across to the West Indies and thence north to New York with sugar, fighting a hurricane off Hatteras, he uttered no word of complaint that might give rise to the suspicion that he had either noticed his father's hostility or had in his mind any thought of rebellion.

To all men who sail the sea there come voyages that are a torture to the spirit, no less than a weariness to the flesh, when things go wrong and the soul of the ship is crushed under a weight of gloom, when there is neither happiness nor companionship nor hope left.

It was so on the *Askelon*, making across the Western Ocean once more, hove-to days on end, head on to the fierce gales of March, staggering under the force of the great seas, bound for the Mediterranean and Genoa with a general cargo. Two men were washed overboard one evening in a wild snow-squall as darkness was falling; and though in their hearts officers and men knew that no boat could have been lowered and the crew live, nevertheless that the *Askelon* did not stop and turn back and search, that no effort had been made to save the lives of the two deckhands, became an additional cause of hate and resentment and suspicion against the hard, grim-faced man on the bridge, who lived a life apart from the life of the ship and yet was, by custom and his own dominant force of character, above all criticism and argument.

Ironfist's courage as a man and his ability as a seaman had never really been doubted or indeed questioned; yet now, because he had refused to throw away the lives of his men recklessly, he was cursed as a coward. He was incompetent, heartless and cruel. He was beneath contempt. Directly the ship arrived at Genoa he would be reported. In common humanity he should be made an example of. And so on.

The third mate listened to the talk and said nothing.

And then the *Askelon* ran into fair weather again, and the horrors of the gale became no more than a faint memory. The bitterness against Ironfist and his disregard for the lives of the two deckhands lost overboard faded. Common sense prevailed. Ironfist had been right. Whatever else he might be, he knew his job. Better to lose two lives than seven or eight!

Only the third mate still showed that what he had seen and suffered had left its mark. In the weeks that had passed since leaving New York he had grown older, graver, sterner; the boyish look in his face had vanished.

The second mate asked him what was wrong. He said simply that he was tired. Tired of what? asked the second, who was of an inquisitive turn of mind. Being hated, said the third. He would say no more.

But those few words had been enough. He was learning at last. This was the opinion on board the *Askelon*. Soon there would come the long-expected outburst, the clash of wills, the culmination of months of anger and resentment and hurt pride.

And about this time, with the weather fair and the work of the ship running smoothly, Ironfist set out deliberately, so it seemed to those watching each movement

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of the struggle, to crush his son. So grim and fierce had his manner become, he appeared to have noticed and resented the subtle change in the boy and determined once and for all to prove himself master over him.

The chief engineer grew worried. Though plump and of a placid, easy-going disposition, he was not afraid of Ironfist; yet to tackle him on the question of his relationship toward his son was not a task to be undertaken lightly.

One warm afternoon soon after dinner the mate came to the chief's room, where he sat in his armchair, smoking and reading.

"Chief," he said, "what are we going to do? Ironfist choked Dickie off in front of the watch this morning like you or I wouldn't speak to a coolie! And for no reason so far as I could see! Why can't he wait till the hands ain't all standing round with their mouths open before he lets fly at him, eh?"

"It's a shame," said the chief. "Aye, a —— shame!"

"You've not spoken to him yet, chief, have you? I'd do it like a shot, but ——"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the use? He'd eat me!"

"I'll dae ma best, Mr. Rack," said the chief. "That's a' I can dae!"

For ten minutes after the mate had left the room he remained deep in thought; then with a sigh, for he hated all unnecessary exertion, he rose to his feet and went out through the engine-room alleyway on deck.

THE captain of the *Askelon*, a square, upright figure, stood on the lower bridge, hands in pockets, watching a passing liner.

Two of the stokehole hands, a wizened little old Welshman called Cledron, and Heasen the trimmer, a Londoner, waiting for the ashes just inside the door of the fiddley, craned their necks and looked at him, half-afraid that he might turn and see them and ask what they were doing.

"'E's a proper ——, old Ironfist!" said Heasen. "Ighn't 'e?"

"Poor man!" said Cledron in his soft, singsong voice. "I am sorry for any one the like of him!"

"Poor man, blyzes!" said Heasen. "What d'yer want to talk like that for, eh, Cleddy?"

The chief halted by the saddleback hatch to fill his pipe.

"Look you, Heasen, lad, that man's soul is heavy with sorrow!"

Heasen broke into a yell of laughter, which he stifled immediately.

"Talk sense, Cleddy!"

"The finest sense ever you heard! And, Heasen, have you ever seen into that hard man's eyes? There's death there! Yes, death in his eyes, Heasen! You can see!"

Old Cledron, a quiet, insignificant, meek little old man, nodded his head. He knew. Others might mock, but he knew. Heasen was silenced. There was something about old Cledron that puzzled him always. He did not understand his habit of talking about people as if he could see right into their minds. It wasn't proper somehow. Like takin' an unfair advantage of a chap!

"What d'yer mean—death?" he said. "There'd be death for you or me, Cleddy, —— quick too, if we run foul o' him! 'Ear 'im choke off the poor little third myte this mornin'! Ah!"

"I am sorry for the two of them!" said old Cledron.

And then the chief engineer passed the doorway on his way to the lower bridge, and they broke off their talk. He had heard what they said. And though the talk of firemen and trimmers was of no importance, yet the thought that even the hands were watching Ironfist and his son, weighing them, waiting for trouble between them, saddened him. But there were no secrets on board ship, he knew.

"Hullo, chief; why the gloom?"

"Why, hullo, Dickie!"

He saw the third mate grinning at him from the port alleyway that led to the saloon, and in spite of his depression he smiled back at him. The sight of the boy's wholesome, brown face with the soft curves of youth not yet obliterated by the hard lines of manhood, his gray eyes set wide apart and the firm mouth, lifted a burden. Dickie looked as he always had looked; where was the gloom there? Surely he and the mate and the others had all been wrong!

"How are the old engines, chief, eh?"

He raised his hand to his ear, as if listening.

"Chief, I believe I can hear 'em! They're still holding together then, eh?"

"Aye," said the chief, "an' lang efter the auld hull's on the scrap the engines wull be

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capable o' their wark! Clyde-built engines winna wear oot sae easy! Hoo are ye feelin' the day?"

"Fine," said the boy.

But the little chief saw all at once, beneath the surface happiness and the laughter, the underlying weariness and anxiety, and his heart sank.

"H'm! I wunner!"

They stared at each other in silence.

"Is that the third mate you're talking to, Mr. MacLeston?"

The chief stepped back a pace and, looking up, saw Ironfist gazing down at him from the head of the ladder.

"Yes, sir," said the third mate, coming out of the shadow of the alleyway into the sunlight. "Did you want me, sir?"

"Why aren't you at work?" said Ironfist in his cold voice.

"I've only just this minute finished my dinner, sir!"

"You've been long enough about it to have eaten two men's dinners beside your own. Get along for'ard to the forepeak and give a hand repairing that cargo gear for discharge!"

The boy reddened under the brown as he stood on the bridge-deck looking up at his father.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but the mate told me to get started on some awnings he wants made."

"Indeed!" said Ironfist. "Well, whatever the mate told you or did not tell you, *I'm* telling you to get for'ard to the forepeak. Understand! That's more important than awnings. I don't want to hear any more!"

"You wish me to work with the men, sir?"

"With the men! Why the —— not!"

The boy's lips tightened, otherwise he showed no sign of being either hurt or annoyed or angry.

"Very good, sir," he said.

He turned and walked away. The chief engineer climbed the ladder to the lower bridge.

"Well, Mac," said Ironfist, "how's everything with you today?"

"A' richt!" said the chief.

He considered.

"Tolerably onywey!" he added.

He leaned by Ironfist's side on the rail and stared aft along the bridge-deck, past the huge black-and-green funnel and the cowled ventilators and the Samson posts toward the stern and the far-off horizon, faint in the haze. The afternoon was very still; the throb of the cranks in the engine room had a curiously soothing effect on the senses; the sun was hot, yet not too hot for comfort. To exert oneself needlessly, to touch on topics that might lead to argument or trouble, seemed madness. Even so, speak he must.

He glanced quickly at Ironfist's hard, brown face, outlined against the blue of the sky, the face of a man accustomed to obedience, self-willed, strong, determined, intolerant; and he heaved a little sigh.

"Ye ocht to be prood o' Dickie, Captain Harron!" he said.

"What's that, chief? Proud! Why?"

"A guid lad!" continued the chief as if the other had not spoken. "I ken fine what ye maun feel!"

He rubbed his hands on a piece of waste he carried in his pocket and pretended not to see the sudden resentment in the fierce eyes, puckered into two slits, that studied him so keenly.

"A guid lad!" he repeated. "I've twa lassies, Captain Harron, an' it's aye been a disapp'intment to their mither an' me—a disapp'intment, ye unnerstaun' ——"

He got no further. Ironfist interrupted him.

"What's that you say, Mr. MacLeston? I ought to be proud! Of whom?"

"Dickie, o' course!"

Ironfist growled.

"I tell you what's wrong with the lad. He's too slack! He's too independent! He's too —— clever to live with! At his age, Mac, I was before the mast, learning my job, doing a man's work for a boy's pay! Lord! Youngsters these days don't know they're alive! Work! Obedience! Discipline! Words without meaning!

"That young cub of mine thinks, because he's third mate on an old tramp like this, he's a grown man! Did you hear how he answered me just now? What did you think of it? What would you have done if one of your juniors had spoken to you like that, eh?"

He stopped. The chief considered. Ironfist's implacable dislike of his own son sickened him. It wasn't right. There must be something wrong in the make-up of a man with so little natural affection as this!

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"Well!" said Ironfist.

The chief realized that he had been waiting for an answer.

"Dinna ye think ye ocht to gang a wee thing slow wi' him?"

"Slow!" said Ironfist. "How?"

"Dickie's a high-spirited lad. It's nae business o' mine, Captain Harron, but if he were ma son I'd be inclined to treat him wit mair kindness an' consideration."

To his astonishment Ironfist took what he said quite coolly. He nodded his head and, after some moments, turned and looked at him once more with what seemed quizzical amusement.

"Mac, you're too soft. If you want to get anywhere in this world at all you've got to be hard. Softness don't pay. If a man's mind is always chock-full of how can he be kind and considerate without a thought to his own interests he's a born loser. That's not my way anyhow."

"Man, ye've an awfu' puir ootluk on life! Wud ye no' be willin' to dae a sairvice to a body in distress wi'oot thinkin' wud it be warth yer while, or what wud it profit ye? I dinna believe it!"

"I wouldn't go one inch out of my road to get mixed up in what didn't concern me, if that's what you mean. Trouble comes easy enough without hunting it! But you're the kind of man, Mac, that would rush in and meddle with other people's business and land yourself up to the neck in all kinds of scrapes without blinking an eyelash."

Again the chief sighed. How easily the talk had drifted away from Dickie!

"I dinna ken aboot that," he said; "but I wud try an' help whaur help was needit. An' noo aboot Dickie. You're sp'ilin' a guid piece o' wark through want o' tact an' forbearance!"

"You like him, Mac, don't you?" said Ironfist after a short silence.

"Aye, we a' like him. It's a terrible thing that I'm gaun to say, Captain Harron, but it seems that the only yin that he disna get on wi' aboard the ship is his ain fayther!"

Ironfist drummed with his fingers on the rail and scowled as if at the bitterness of his own thoughts.

"You never had a son, Mac, of course, and it's just as well for you maybe you hadn't; and for him too! You'd have ruined him through your —— soft-heartedness. Mac, I know my own son through and through. The rest of you don't. You like him, and that's enough. I know his tendencies, his failings, his instincts. I've studied the lad since he was a baby. I can see my own self in him, Mac, as plain as I can read print, and I'm taking the gloves off from now on. I'm going to knock some of the conceit out of him somehow. It'll be hard, but it'll be worth it! Before I've finished, I'll have made a man of him! You see!"

He showed his square, white teeth in a little smile, and then with an offhand nod moved away from the rail and entered his room.

DICKIE HARRON, the third mate of the *Askelon*, climbed the ladder to the flying bridge.

The mate stood by the starboard telegraph and turned as he heard his footsteps. He tried to signal a warning, but was too late.

"Hullo, Mr. Rack; here I am at last, eh! Getting tired of waiting?"

Ironfist, wrapped in a big coat, a shapeless figure in the darkness, approached slowly from in front of the wheel-house.

"Mr. Harron," he said sharply, "you're late! Eight bells struck more than five minutes ago. The watch has been relieved. What do you mean by it?"

The boy had no answer ready. The mate spoke for him.

"I beg your pardon, sir; but it's my fault entirely. I told the third mate there was no reason for him to be on time tonight."

"There's as much reason, Mr. Rack, tonight as any other night," said the harsh voice.

"No, sir, begging your pardon, sir. Last night, sir, the third mate was kept on the bridge longer than he should have been because I asked the second mate to——"

Ironfist cut him short.

"That 'ull do, mister. It's got nothin' to do with the case in point what happened last night. Understand! The third mate was late in taking over the bridge. There's no excuse."

He turned to his son.

"Don't let it occur again! This is the second time I've had to find fault with you today. If you want to be logged you're going the right way about it!"

He walked stiffly to the other wing of the bridge.

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"Hard luck, Dickie!" said the mate under his breath. "Can't be helped! My fault!"

"—— him!" said the boy in a fierce whisper. "—— him! He doesn't give me a chance! I'm sick of it, Mr. Rack! Sick of it!"

The mate was startled. For the first time since he had known him he had heard the boy say what he thought of his father.

"S-shi" he said. "Steady, Dickie! He'll hear!"

He gave the course, said good night and climbed down the ladder.

The only man who saw and heard what took place after the mate had left the bridge was Leath, the man at the wheel for the first two hours of the third mate's watch. Leath told the men in the fo'csle later; next morning in the forenoon watch the fourth engineer heard one of the firemen telling another in the stokehole; the fourth told the third, the third told the second mate, and so it was known all over the ship.

The sea was very calm that night, and to keep the ship on her course was easy. Leath said he was paying no particular attention to anything except the binnacle when all of a sudden he heard voices and raised his eyes quickly and saw through the wheel-house windows the captain and the third mate standing facing each other in the darkness, talking.

They were angry, both of them, Leath said; yet neither of them spoke much above a whisper.

"You treat me like a dog, sir!" said the third mate. "I'll never sail with you again as long as I live!"

"You're an officer under my command," said Ironfist. "Please moderate your language!"

"I'm third mate, an officer, as you keep reminding me. I might be an ordinary seaman. You give me no chance."

"I think you're forgetting yourself!" said Ironfist.

There was a short silence. Then Ironfist, still in the same even tone, spoke again.

"You will apologize!"

"I apologize," said the boy after a moment's hesitation. "I beg your pardon for having thought of you as anything but captain of this ship."

Ironfist barked out a laugh.

"Bear it in mind then!" he said. "I want no more nonsense. Understand! Next time I'll not be so easy."

Soon after he left the bridge.

At midnight when the chief engineer was smoking a last pipe, leaning over the rails overlooking the after well-deck, he heard footsteps and turning saw the third mate in the light of the alleyway.

"Hello, Dickie!" he said. "What are ye daein' here?"

The boy stood by his side.

"Nothing," he said.

"Ye ocht to be turnin' in; at your age, Dickie, ye need a' the sleep ye can get."

"Sleep!" said the boy. "Why? I'm not tired."

"Ye ocht to be then," said the chief. "What's wrang?"

As if the question had unloosed his pent-up feelings, the boy began to talk.

"Chief, I've had enough. I told him so tonight on the bridge. Yes, it's gone on too long already—month after month the same! I told him I wouldn't stand it!"

"Wha dae ye mean?"

"The old man. I might be a lascar deckhand. You heard him this afternoon, chief; tonight he was at it again, —— him! On the bridge. For no reason. I tell you, chief, it's come to this; either he or I ——"

The chief stopped him.

"Dickie, I'll no listen to that like o' blether! He disna mean onything. Ye're makin' a mole-hill into a mountain."

"Doesn't mean anything!" said the boy. "Mr. MacLeston, he hates the sight of me. I've done my best always. I've gone straight, worked hard, tried—and what's the good? The one pleasure he has in the world is to make me feel small. It can't go on, chief. It's not going on, either. I'll never sail with him again."

And so it was war between father and son at last. The chief, being a tender-hearted little man, was sorry.

II

TRIEVE, the second mate, and Oatfield, the second engineer, were going ashore. Like two schoolboys, released from work, they talked loudly and laughed boisterously at nothing in particular, happy to be in port once more.

"I'm as dry as last week's hash!" said the second mate. "It'll take a couple of quarts to wash the salt out of my gullet!"

"It's oil and coal dust in mine, Jack!" said the second engineer. "Let's go an' drink lager at Marco's!"

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"Lord!" The second mate laughed. "Once I was there when the crowd just about smashed up the bar. He went up in the air:

" 'Vot you want to ruin me for! By golies! Vot you want to breaka da house! I sharge you da cost! You paya da mon' or I fesha da polis!' "

"And did he?" asked the second engineer with an appreciative grin.

The second mate's tales of his adventures ashore, though not as a rule particularly reputable, had lightened many a gloomy hour at sea.

"We didn't wait to find out. We left, the lot of us. Some one, I won't tell you who, Tommy, switched off the lights. Lord! I never stopped laughing for a week afterward!"

"Jack," said the second engineer, shaking his head, "I grow more and more ashamed of you the more I know of you! You'll come to a bad end!"

"That's what they all say!" said the second mate. "As long as it's not tonight, who cares! Ever been at Catarina's place, Tommy?"

"Catarina!"

"Yes. That café up near the Via Settembre Something-or-Other! It isn't a bad kind of joint. Let's go on there and see what's doing."

The second engineer chuckled.

"Beats me why you call her Catarina. Kate's her name. She's English."

"English!" said the second mate, surprized.

"Yes. She married an Austrian or a Spaniard and came out to Italy thirty-odd years ago. She's a very respectable lady now, Jack, and what's more she lets you know it; but I remember when she was running the Blackwall Bar five, six year back, on the waterfront, before she made money enough to move up-town. You wouldn't think to look at her now that once she was the kind you'd have crossed the street in broad daylight to dodge, but's it's true all the same!"

"I never knew she was English!" said the second mate. "She doesn't look like it anyhow. Last time I was in her joint I was third on the *Shirwa*, and I had a row with a fellow from another ship. Catarina or whatever her name is wasn't pleased with us! I wonder if she's forgotten."

"She never forgets!" said the second engineer.

The second mate yawned.

"Where's young Dickie got to? What's keeping him?"

The two men stood on the bridge deck of the *Askelon*, outside the saloon alleyway, near the lower bridge ladder, and waited for the third mate, who was going ashore with them.

The night was dark; the moon had set; great stars spangled the heavens and reflected their brilliance in the calm waters of the harbor; the lights of the city stretched high up above the shipping on hills invisible in the darkness. From the breakwater on the other side of the inner harbor there came the clank of railway wagons and the panting of an engine; far out at sea a steamer's whistle hooted impatiently; and then the door of the captain's room slammed and heavy feet trod the lower bridge. Some one coughed.

"One minute, Mr. MacLeston; I won't be long!"

The second mate dug the second engineer in the ribs and chuckled.

"Listen!"

"Have I kept you two hanging around? I'm —— sorry!"

Dickie Harron hurried out of the alleyway, putting on his jacket.

"Ready?" asked the second engineer. "Let's hustle then!"

Ironfist's voice spoke from the lower bridge.

"Mr. Harron there?"

"Sir!" said the third mate.

"I want to speak to you."

"Well, sir!"

The boy was at the foot of the ladder, gazing up at his father.

After a moment's pause Ironfist climbed down the ladder to the bridge deck, moving deliberately as if the evening were before him.

The second mate and the second engineer stepped back into the alleyway. The light from a port cast a yellow glow on the older man's hard face, bringing into relief the lines in his cheeks and the sneer on his lips and the fierceness of his gaze. The face of the boy was in shadow.

The father frowned.

"Are you going ashore tonight?" he asked.

"I am, sir," answered the boy.

He spoke roughly, as if on his guard against interference.

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"Why didn't you tell me?"

"You never asked."

"Haven't you always made it a habit in the past to tell me your plans?"

"Whatever need there may have been then, there's no need of it now."

"That's for me to judge," said Ironfist.

"I think not," said the boy. "I suppose, sir, there's no objection to my doing just what I like with my time when I'm not on duty, is there?"

"There's every objection!"

"I beg your pardon, sir; I'm afraid I don't understand you."

"You're unusually dense then," said Ironfist. "I've a perfect right to decide what you may do or may not do at any time!"

"I never yet heard of the captain of a ship, sir, interfering with his third mate to that extent!"

It seemed to the men watching that Ironfist was for once on the verge of flaring into a wild rage. His face was red. His eyes had narrowed.

"I'm not talking to you as third mate," he said, "now. That has nothing to do with the matter in hand. I'm talking to you as my son."

"Then," said the boy, "if that's all we needn't talk any more. I'm third mate and you're captain, and that's the only connection between us until you get rid of me or I throw up my job and look for another ship, and then there's no connection at all. I'm no more to you than one of the hands. What have I to look for here? Unpleasantness, that's all! And yet you expect me to come to you and ask permission: May I go ashore, please, if I promise to behave myself and not do anything wrong!"

The boy's voice rose higher and he stuttered, unable to express his feelings in words because of the intensity of his anger.

"That will do!" said the captain coldly. "Who are you going with?"

Whether he had seen the second engineer and the second mate waiting in the shadow, it was impossible to tell. Probably he had. It was one of his habits not to notice people and then to say things intended apparently for their ears. When the third mate answered his question, "Mr. Trieve and Mr. Oatfield," he merely gave a kind of grunt that might have been relief or disgust and nodded.

"Don't go getting into any trouble then! You know my rules!"

"You don't give me a chance to forget them," said the boy. "I can take care of myself, thank you—I'm not a child!"

"You're remarkably like one in your behavior anyway," said Ironfist.

He climbed the ladder to the lower bridge once more to where the chief engineer leaned over the rails, watching the lights ashore and pondering on the bitterness of the struggle between the son and father.

CATARINA'S café, a long, ugly room below street level, gaudily decorated in blue and white and gold with small palms in earthenware tubs painted orange and a platform at one end and a piano, was crowded.

Dickie Harron sat with the second mate and the second engineer of the *Askelon* at one of the small marble-top tables, set against the wall, but near the open floor space that was reserved for dancing.

His thin, brown face looked strangely tired and wretched; his eyes were dull and lifeless; he spoke seldom and showed no interest in his surroundings, but drank heavily.

Nothing that had been said to him since leaving the ship had roused him from his state of gloom. He was like a man who had definitely abandoned hope.

"Is there anything wrong, Dickie?" asked the second engineer.

The boy shook his head.

The second mate—and he too had been drinking more than was good for him—leaned forward across the table.

"Dickie, don't you be a wet blanket! You're spoiling the evening. Why don't you enjoy yourself the same as us, eh?"

"Are you enjoying yourself?" said Dickie. "Good! I'm glad!"

He yawned.

"Seems pretty —— dull, doesn't it!"

"Dull as ditchwater!" agreed the second mate, always ready to oblige. "Let's go where it's lively! This here place gives me the hump, like a prayer-meeting down at the mission!"

He raised his voice and shouted at the two faded women who played the piano and violin.

"Hi! What's wrong with you? Give's a tune. You, Jane and Sarah, or whatever your names are, what are you laying off for, eh? Let's hear you knock sparks out o' them musical instruments o' yours!"

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As if the second mate's appeal had brought an immediate response a little old man in shabby black came on the platform with a mandolin, seated himself on a chair and played a strange little air that repeated itself again and again with a refrain that was full of melody and soothing to the ear, yet had in its notes a strain of sadness and longing.

And then a girl, dressed in a short-sleeved frock of black velvet, very plain in cut with a V-shaped front, a skirt that reached to slender ankles in scarlet silk, black velvet pumps with high heels and silver buckles and a scarlet shawl swathed around her slim waist and over her shoulder, swaggered into the room from a door by the side of the platform, stepped into the center of the empty floor space and began to dance, castanets clicking in her hands. She had a slender, lissom figure and was in a curious, wistful way pretty; her black hair curled away from her small, set face; her dark eyes were large and somber. Her lips, pink against the ivory of her complexion, very serious at first, presently curved into a smile of contempt as she danced with a grave dignity and grace that seemed unfamiliar and out of place at Catarina's.

Dickie had twisted round in his chair and was watching her.

The second mate hummed the refrain of the little tune.

"She's a peach, that kid! That's a Spanish dance, ain't it?"

"Good lass!" shouted a man at the next table. "That's the style, Nina! Show 'em what you can do!"

"Now then, kid! Speed 'er up! Speed 'er up!" shouted another. "Get down to it!"

"Oh, ——!" said Dickie.

He was angry to think that any girl should have to dance before such swine as these. He turned his back on the dancer and emptied his glass.

"What the —— did we come here for, eh?"

The dance ended in a storm of hand-clapping. The girl bowed right and left, flinging out her arms backward as she bent her body; and then without a change of expression she walked slowly away.

"Nina!"

The applause persisted.

"Nina! Encore!"

But she did not appear again.

"This is a putrid hole!" said Dickie. "Let's go!"

"Dickie," said the second mate, "why don't you cheer up? Grin, —— you! Be like me and the second engineer! We ain't miserable, are we?"

The boy began to laugh.

"You're right!" he said. "What's the use of having the hump, eh? Life's too short! Thank the Lord it's no longer than it is!"

He held the bottle up to the light.

"My shout! Where's that darn waitress got to? And, hullo! who's this blown in, eh?"

"Who's what?" said the second engineer.

He grinned.

"That's her, herself! Catarina!"

He whistled.

"Hullo, *signora—buona sera, signora, come sta lei?*"

Catarina was very stout. Nevertheless it was obvious that she had been prepared to suffer rather than lose the memory of a once shapely figure. In her black satin dress, cut low in the bosom, she resembled an hour-glass; tightly laced at the waist, she bulged above and below. Diamonds sparkled in her ears; a pearl necklace encircled her huge neck; her hair, black and glossy with oil, was drawn back from her face, which was painted and powdered so heavily that her expression of bland benevolence might have been accepted as a true index of her character, had it not been for the cunning in the small, dark eyes that kept glancing quickly from side to side under veiled lashes.

She walked with tottering footsteps, as if in pain. Judging from her carriage, perhaps her heels were too high and her patent-leather shoes too tight for the size of her feet. She looked top-heavy, badly balanced.

"*Benissimo, grazie. Godo di verderla.*"

She beamed and stood looking down at the three men from the *Askelon*.

"You spik Italian, eh?" she asked.

"No," said the second mate. "No, *signora*."

"A peety! But you enjoy yousel' dees ev'nin', eh! I laik to see you ver' much!"

"Kate," said the second engineer, "chuck it! What's the use of coming the old soldier on me! Don't tell me you've forgotten the East India Dock Road and Whitechapel High Street where you came from! Talk English!"

Kate lost her temper.

"You talk like a —— fool!" she said.

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"What makes you think I'm English, you cockroach!"

The third mate smiled at her.

"*Signora*," he said, "the best-looking girls in the world are English. You understand! When we see you we know without having to ask where you were born and raised!"

Kate went red under the mass of powder, choked and then roared with hearty laughter. She patted the boy on the shoulder and would perhaps have embraced him and kissed him had he shown the slightest sign of being overcome by her charms.

"You're all right, you are," she said. "The best-looking girls in the world, eh! ——! I ain't laughed so much since my old man fell off the dock an' was drowned in six inches of mud!"

She wiped her eyes and then swore as she saw the pink smear of rouge on her handkerchief.

"—— and blast you, kid, you made me laugh, and I've spoilt my make-up! You're a caution, you are, and no mistake!"

She shook her head at him in reproof.

"At your age, too! Don't you go getting too gay with my girls, boy! An' remember, the lot o' you, I've not been nearer to England than the end of the breakwater 'ere!"

"Kate," said the second engineer, "I know better!"

"That you don't!" she said, ruffled once more. "When I s'y a thing, I mean it!"

She spoke to Dickie again:

"So I'm good-looking, eh! Well, if you'd seen me ten years ago, kid, or five even, you'd have been speaking the truth. But now—crumbs! I'm parssay, as we say in Paris! Parssay!"

She studied her reflection in a gold-framed looking-glass on the wall and raised her chin and stroked her hair.

"Not too bad even now, though, eh?" she said. "But —— and blast! I got to make up all over or the fellers 'ull be findin' out it ain't my real color they like so much! An' that 'ud never do, would it, eh!"

She toddled off on her high heels, still chuckling, and vanished through the door at the side of the platform.

"She 's not a bad old sort!" said Dickie easily.

"Dickie," said the second engineer, "they're only waiting for old Kate to arrive before they put out the 'House Full' boards at ——'s gate! See! She's bad—as bad as a snake that you've trod on in the dark!"

Dickie was startled.

"That so! She seemed pleasant enough anyway!"

"Pleasant! Oh, yes; so's the ——!"

"Why drag in da ——, eh!" said a clear voice.

They turned and saw the girl in black velvet with the wide scarlet shawl swathed around her standing by their table looking down at them; and though the expression in her eyes was still sad the smile on her lips was no longer scornful but rather friendly.

Dickie stared at her in a puzzled way and said nothing. The girl flushed, said something in Italian and laughed shyly. The boy stretched out his arm and reached for an empty chair from the next table.

"Sit down and talk to us," he said.

She seated herself without a word.

"Do you speak English?" he said.

She nodded. "Yes. I read bettaire zan I spik it."

And then her forehead puckered and the smile faded.

"Why you say da bes'-lookin' girls in da worrl', Angleesh, eh?"

"I hadn't seen you then," said the boy.

She did not laugh.

"Best zing for you, too!" she said.

Her voice was bitter. She glanced uneasily across the room toward the door through which Kate had gone.

"Look here!" said Dickie. "What are you doing in a place like this? Ought you to be here, Nina?"

The second engineer coughed.

"Dickie!" he said.

"Don't trouble about me!" said the girl with a little shrug of her shoulders.

She tapped her fingers on the boy's knuckles. The orchestra, the two women and the little old man, had struck up a lively two-step. She rose to her feet.

"Come, Deeckie! I teach you to dance."

"WELL, I be blessed!" said the second mate. "If Ironfist could see Dickie now he'd just about kill him; and tomorrow you an' me, Tommy, would be thinking where we could get another ship! That's the first time I've ever known him go off like that an' dance with a girl! What's got him?"

"A rum little cuss!" said the second engineer presently. "I don't understand him.

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He's cowed, that's what's wrong with him."

He emptied his glass.

"Gor! What awful muck that old woman does sell! Why do we drink it, eh? If this is Scotch, then the chief and the third come from Jerusalem!"

The second mate nodded.

"Tommy, look over by the door yonder. See that man! He ain' taken his eyes off that girl an' Dickie since they stood up to dance."

A man, dressed in black, with a thin, sallow face and a big nose, bad eyes set too close to each other and a sneer on his thin lips, leaned against the wall, smoking a cigaret and watching Dickie Harron and the girl with the black curly hair.

"Dago!" said the second mate.

"Yes," said the second engineer. "Dago! And bad at that. Dunno which 'ud be worst, to have him as a friend or an enemy!"

"He's the kind of man," said the second mate, "I hate. A slimy ——! It gives you a bad taste in your mouth to talk of him! What's he here for, eh? Who is he?"

The girl and the third mate came back to the table and sat down.

"It is ver' hot," said the girl in a tired voice. "But you like to dance, eh!"

"With you," he said.

The girl laughed.

"You get on ver' queeck!" she said.

"At dancing!" said the second mate.

Again she laughed.

"Here, let's have a bottle of wine," said the boy.

He called to the waitress—

"Lucy, here!"

The girl with whom he had danced made a little face and said something in Italian. The waitress, a thin, dark, tired-looking girl whose make-up could not hide the ghastly weariness of her look, glanced at her as if they were enemies, shrugged her shoulders and did not answer.

"You'll have some wine, Nina, won't you?" said the boy.

"Oh, yes," said the girl. "Zat is part of what you would call da job, eh!"

Yet when the wine was brought she merely put her lips to the glass and would not drink. She was not thirsty, she said.

"Where did you learn English?" asked the boy.

"At school," she said. "At da conven' where I was educate! Oh, yes, I can spik Angleesh, an' French too! Ver' clevaire, eh!"

"But, Nina," said the boy, and once more he returned to the question that he had asked before the girl had invited him to dance; "Nina, what are you doing here then? It's none of my business, but—isn't there anything else you can do?"

"I can do a 'eap of things," said the girl gravely. "Oh, yes!"

The boy went on:

"Have you any people? You know—a father and mother—a home?"

It flashed into the second engineer's mind that Dickie had had too much to drink. This was the explanation. But he must stop him before he went any further.

"Dickie, old son, listen!"

The girl's cheeks were flushed. She was staring at Dickie with a curiously pathetic, appealing look in her eyes, as if she begged him to let her be; yet she answered his question.

"Yes, I have a home. My fazer an' mozer zey do not like me. I ron away from zem."

"Oh!"

The boy nodded.

"Do they know where you are, Nina?"

She shook her head.

"Zey zink I am—how you say it?—on da stage—an actress! Zat is what I said I would do! Zere was a man who tol' lies to me!"

She spread out her small, white hands and smiled a rather sad little smile.

"An', Deeckie, I am here, dancin' at a place like zis! I had no money—no food—nozin'! Well, it does not mattaire, does it?"

And then she leaned forward, her elbows on the table, her chin propped on her hands.

"Now, let us talk about zomezing else!"

"Nina," said the second mate suddenly, "who's that —— ugly guy standing by the wall glaring at us like he wanted to knife us?"

The girl glanced quickly over her shoulder, and the man raised his hand and beckoned. She did not move. He beckoned again. And then she rose to her feet obediently, all trace of laughter gone, her face pale. She bent down and spoke to the three men at the table in a whisper.

"He ver' angry, zat man! Good-by!"

"Here," said Dickie.

He grabbed at her wrist.

"Listen, Nina, what's it to do with him? Angry! Why?"

She hushed him.

"Please, Deeckie!"

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"For two pins," said the second mate, "I'd go over and clump that josser's head, lookin' like that!"

"Please," said the girl. "You do not onderstand! He is ver' dangerous! I 'ate him, but I am afraid of him. Please, Deeckie, let me go! I mus'!"

She moved slowly away from them, walking with a curious swagger, swinging her shoulders a little, as if quite at her ease and eager to attract attention to herself. The man with the bad eyes and the thin face scowled at her as she drew near.

The three men watched her stop and bow to him, in mockery it seemed, and then stand upright, her hands clasped on her bosom, her head tilted. What she said to him or he said to her they could not hear; but all at once the man took a step forward and the girl shrank away from him. She thrust out her hands and waved him back. Dickie swore and jumped to his feet; both the second mate and the second engineer grabbed at him and held him.

The man with the thin face and the bad eyes caught hold of the girl's arm and laughed. He drew her close to him. She tried to free herself.

And then old Kate, her cheeks brilliant with carmine once more, appeared in the doorway and spoke. From her manner, the way she gesticulated with her hands and shook her big head, she was furious. The man laughed and let go of the girl, who pushed roughly past old Kate and disappeared behind the curtain.

"Now what in thunder that means Lord only knows!" said the second engineer.

Kate and the man with the thin nose were still standing at the door, talking. She seemed to be soothing him, calming him down; she had her hand on his shoulder and was smiling into his face. All at once he gave a shrug, patted her cheek; and then he too went out.

"Why the —— didn't you two let me go across and give him a punch on the jaw when he was mauling that kid, eh?" said Dickie.

"My lad," said the second mate, "there's been more trouble in this little old world through young fellers like you wanting to prove how brave they are an' getting themselves into scraps than enough. See! Me an' Tommy here's responsible for you—understand! An', without being in any way a reflection on your captain back on the ship —my captain, too, if it comes to that—we're *in loco parentis* for the time being, as you might put it; an' if there's to be any scrapping to tonight it'll be your uncle that's going to do it! See! Now be good, Dickie, or we'll take you home an' put you to bed."

"Jack's right," said the second engineer. "Dickie, you ought to know better by this time! That man's a tough egg. —— ugly customer, I should say. Steer clear o' him!"

"I can take care of myself, Mr. Oatfield," said Dickie huffily. "Don't you make any mistake about that!"

"So can our friend with the beak. He hasn't reached his age without bein' told some time or other what kind of offal he is, an' seein' he's still alive, I suppose he's learnt how to handle himself in a free-for-all with the best of 'em!"

Dickie grunted.

"Where's that waitress?" said the second mate. "Hi!"

Once more the girl came to the table and stood with her tray in her hands, waiting. Like most of the girls employed by Kate she could speak English.

"Well!" she said. "What you want now? Visky?"

"No," said the second mate, "nothing. Lucy, who was that feller talking to Nina just now at the door?"

There leaped into her eyes a look of such venom that the second mate drew back from her swiftly. She put her finger on her lips as if motioning him to be quiet. He did not understand and, looking past her, saw Kate watching them.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Sooch a fool!" said the girl. "No. You do not know, eh! I tell you—he ver' bad! See! Ver' bad! *Il scorpione*—how you say—scorpion! Da girls like heem, eh! Ver' heap many sweethearts! I weesh 'e was daid!"

With a nod of her head, which might have been either another warning or a token of understanding, she hurried away.

"Let's be moving," said Dickie. "This place is giving me the horrors. Can't we go somewhere else, eh?"

"We can," said the second mate. "Why not! Old Kate's enough to make a man swear off the booze for a lifetime. Look at her! Errgh!"

He shuddered.

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"I've got a thirst on me I wouldn't swap for a month of salt horse and pickles!"

"All right!" said the second engineer. "Let's go then!"

As they were making their way out of the long room between the tables, Kate, in her black satin with her brilliant coloring and her diamonds and her benevolent smile that seemed even more benevolent than when they had first seen her, called to them.

"You'll come again, won't you!" she said. "Tomorrow, eh?"

"Mebbe yes, mebbe no," said the second engineer.

She looked at the third mate and chuckled.

"You're a rum kid, ain't yer!" she said. "An' you think I'm English, eh, because all the pretty girls come from England! What next will it be, eh?"

"What became of that girl I was dancing with?" asked Dickie.

"What girl?" Kate asked.

"That girl in black with the red shawl around her."

"I dunno," said Kate vaguely. "How should I? She went home perhaps. I dunno."

She frowned.

"What did you want her for, eh?"

She winked and looked sly and unpleasant.

"I wanted to say good night to her," said Dickie.

"Oh!" said Kate. "Then maybe it's just as well that you can't! She's a good little girl, that, an' I'm tykin' partickler care of her!"

"What the —— do you mean by that?" said Dickie furiously.

"Come on! Come on!" said the second engineer.

He took hold of the boy's arm.

"Let's go!"

THREE more drinks at another bar that resembled Kate's in almost everything save size and noise convinced the second engineer that the sooner he got the second mate and the third back to the *Askelon* the better.

Both in his opinion had drunk as much bad liquor as they were capable of carrying with either comfort or discretion. He was certain of this because of their extreme friendliness and politeness and their readiness to agree with whatever was said to them.

And so when the second mate suggested as soon as they reached the open air once more that they should finish up the evening with some whisky at a café he knew, and the third mate said that personally nothing would please him better, the second engineer objected.

"No," he said firmly, "it can't be done!"

"Why not?" said Dickie. "Come on, Mr. Oatfield, be a man! Let's go and see this place of the second's."

"The only other place you'll see tonight Dickie, will be your little bunk. We're going back to the ship."

The second mate was hurt.

"Tommy, you're spoiling the whole evening!"

"Do you know the time?" said the second engineer. "It's gone half-past twelve! And I'm dog tired. So tired I can hardly keep my eyes open! If you knew what I felt like, you wouldn't ask me to drag around pub-crawlin' any longer!"

They wouldn't! They insisted with the utmost good nature that they must return on board at once! The second engineer was tired. That was enough. Poor old Tommy!

They started off in the direction of the harbor, their footsteps on the pavement echoing in the stillness. The streets were deserted. In the cafés lights still shone. The sound of music came from behind closed doors.

For some minutes they walked in silence. The second engineer was satisfied that his lie had been justified, that the worst was past and that they would reach the ship with no further trouble. Suddenly, just as they came abreast of a narrow alley turning off the winding street, an alley of steep stone stairs that led up-hill between tall buildings and arches overhead, the third mate halted.

"Wait!" he said in a sharp whisper. "Look there!"

At the arched doorway of a house that towered above the dark and narrow alley, stood a girl and a man. The girl wore a big gray cloak over a black dress with scarlet stockings; silver buckles glinted on her high-heeled shoes. The man was half inside the doorway and hidden by the shadow, but he had one arm around the girl and was trying to draw her in. She was pleading with him in a low, frightened voice and pulling against him.

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And then apparently the man lost his temper, for all at once he changed his method of attack, flung his other arm around her, crushed her to him and bent his face to hers. The girl uttered a loud shriek. She put her hands on his shoulders and tried to twist herself free. As she turned her head the light of the lamp in the doorway fell on her face.

"It's Nina, that girl from Kate's!" said the second mate.

"And the Scorpion!" said the second engineer.

He looked quickly toward the third.

"Dickie!" he said.

He was too late. Already the boy was hurrying toward the doorway where the Scorpion, the thin man with the bad eyes and the long nose, and the girl, the girl with whom he had danced, were struggling.

"Blast!" said the second engineer.

He slid his arm out of the second mate's and followed.

"Here!" said Dickie. "What the —— are you doing! Leave that girl be!"

He brought his open hand down hard on the man's shoulder. The Scorpion raised his face, livid with rage. He still had the girl in his arms.

"What th' —— you interferin' for, eh?" he snarled.

"Let go of that girl, do you hear!" said Dickie.

"Go slow, Dickie!" said the second engineer. "Go slow, for Heaven's sake!"

"You mind your own business!" said the Scorpion. "Or you'll be sorry you ever was born, you —— pup dog! Thees girl my girl. See! Get to —— from here! Queeck!"

Dickie wasted no more time, but hit him with all his force under his pointed jaw. The Scorpion released his hold on the girl and staggered back against the door post, clawing with his hands at the half-door that was closed and the stonework of the house to keep his balance.

Dickie waited, his nostrils puffed out, his mouth set in a hard line, his eyes narrowed.

The Scorpion, crouched in the doorway, one shoulder higher than the other, one hand in front of his face, glared at him.

"Like some more?" said Dickie. "You touch that girl again and see what happens!"

All at once the Scorpion sprang from the doorway, a knife in his hand. The second engineer gave a warning yell, and Dickie stepped to one side swiftly. Afterward the second engineer was not quite sure how it had all happened; but as he ran forward to help, he saw Dickie's fist shoot out. He heard a noise like the crack of a stock whip —and then the Scorpion lay face down on the stones, groaning. Dickie dropped on top of him and twisted his wrist round till he screamed. Then Dickie rose to his feet, the knife in his hand.

"You —— young fool, Dickie!" said the second engineer. "Good work, all the same!"

The second mate was laughing.

"Five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, and out! Harron wins!"

Already a group of about a dozen men and women had gathered and were chattering excitedly. Apparently, though, they were not so much hostile as amused and interested.

Very slowly the Scorpion stood up; his nose was bleeding and he had cut his forehead; he swayed unsteadily on his feet.

"Well!" said Dickie. "Well!"

The Scorpion pointed a trembling hand at him.

"Ver-ry well, mister; now I will kill you! I will kill you dead! I prromise you!"

Dickie laughed boyishly.

"—— good of you, old man!" he said and took a step forward, smiling, and with a hard drive in the mouth knocked the Scorpion down once more.

The crowd had increased in numbers. Windows had been thrown open and heads thrust forth. Some one, a woman, began to scream.

A man's voice spoke to them from the shadows.

"You boys, you wanta mak' haste! Ze policemen—zey gome—*capisce?* Ron like ——!"

To the second engineer the advice seemed sound.

Seizing Dickie with one hand and the second mate with the other, he hurried them off, out of the narrow alley into the broader street, lit by arc lamps, and safe from sudden attack.

"A quiet evenin' on shore!" he said bitterly. "My aunt in heaven! Dickie, you ruddy fool, what did you want to go scrapping for?"

"What else could I do? Do you think I was going to stand by and see that filthy brute pawing that girl? Don't you understand what a ripping good sort she is? I

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tell you, a man like the Scorpion needs stringing up! I wish—I wish I'd marked him more than I did!"

Out of another narrow side alley stepped Nina, white and terrified. She laid her hand on Dickie's arm.

"You all right, eh!" she said. "He no' hurta you, eh? Zat ver' good! Listen, he ver' bad man! You be ver' careful, Deeckie! Ver' careful! Good-by, an' zank you! I no' see you again. If you come ashore, he keell you. Zat is certain!"

Before they could stop her or ask her to explain she had gone.

"That's queer!" said the second mate. "What'd she mean by that?"

"Dickie!" said the second engineer. "Did you hear what she said. That's good advice. She meant it. If you value your life you won't go ashore again while we're here!"

The boy laughed.

"A bit far-fetched, isn't it, Mr. Oatfield? There's no need to worry, so far as I can see! Why, I could lick the Scorpion with one hand!"

When they reached the bridge deck of the *Askelon* they stood and talked before going to their rooms.

"You won't say a word about what happened, will you?" said Dickie. "I don't want it to get around."

"No," said the second engineer, "we won't tell a soul!"

"Not likely to," said the second mate.

The boy yawned.

"I'm tired," he said.

A square figure emerged from the shadow. Ironfist, smoking, the end of his cigar glowing, approached.

He cast a quick, searching glance at them and frowned.

"Good night," he said in his cold, even voice.

"Good night, sir," said the second engineer and the second mate.

Ironfist passed on toward the lower bridge.

The third mate laughed harshly under his breath.

"He was waiting for me, of course—listening to what we said. I know him. He'd give anything in the world to find something he could use against me. He hoped I'd be drunk, I bet. —— him!"

He gave a shrug.

"Do you think he heard?" asked the second mate.

"Don't know and don't care!"

III

THERE came a knock at the door of the second engineer's berth.

"Come in," he said.

Dickie Harron stood grinning at him from the alleyway.

"Why, hullo, Dickie, what brings you here?"

He frowned.

"What've you got your best clothes on for, eh?"

"Mr. Oatfield, it's no use. I've been on this —— old barge for the last two nights; I'm fed up with it. I'm going ashore. You'd better come, too. It won't take you five minutes to get washed and changed. I'll wait for you."

"No," said the second engineer. "No, Dickie, I'm not going. And, Dickie, you may think me a gibbering old fool, but I mean what I say—it's not safe for you to go knocking around the town. That Scorpion you gave a licking to the other night is laying for you! Don't you make any mistake about that. It won't be a matter of fists either. You know that as well as I do."

"Shouldn't mind much," said the boy. "Life's not worth a tinker's curse anyway! The old man's been raving his giddy old head off all day—I want a drink. I want about twenty drinks. And if you think I'm afraid of the Scorpion, or fifty Scorpions, Tommy, you're wrong!"

"I know that—that's the —— of it! If you were afraid of him there'd be nothing to worry about—you wouldn't go near him."

"Ah!" said Dickie. "Maybe I wouldn't!"

"Well then you're not afraid, we know. Why not let sleeping dogs lie? Dickie, you stay aboard and don't go running your head into trouble. See?"

The boy's face was a little less set and stubborn. He grinned.

"Promise me," the second engineer insisted.

"All right," said Dickie. "Anything for a quiet life. See you later."

He closed the door. The second engineer, satisfied that he had done what was right, seated himself again on his settee, lit his pipe and picked up his book.

A half hour passed—a half hour of solid enjoyment and peace, untroubled by any thought of either Dickie Harron or his

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father or the *Askelon's* engines or anything else save the adventures of a red-headed heroine who was fighting a battle single-handed against the world.

And then the second engineer was roused once more by some one knocking.

"Come in," he said in a resigned tone of voice. "Come in."

The stout little chief engineer, his round face pink and shining from soap and water, his eyes twinkling, entered.

"Hullo, chief," said the second, trying to appear pleased. "Come in and take a seat."

"Nae," said the chief. "I'm no' stoppin' the noo. I thocht I'd esk ye if ye wantit to mak' up a four at bridge."

"Who d'you want me to play with?"

"Weel, there's the mate an' masel', an' if I get you that's three, an' the auld man!"

Straightway the second engineer raised objections.

"Chief, I'll be blowed if I do. You don't catch me playing with Ironfist and gettin' ticked off at the end of every round same as I did last time. No, chief, you'll have to get some one else. Ask the second mate."

"He's gaun ashore."

"Oh," said the second engineer. "Oh! Why didn't he come an' tell me? Did he go by himself, chief?"

"Nae," said the chief. "He gaed wi' young Dickie Harron aboot a hauf hoor syne."

To the chief engineer's amazement the second engineer sprang to his feet, hurled his book into his bunk and began to take off his jacket.

"What's wrang?" asked the chief.

The second engineer, as a rule deliberate in his movements even at times when other men were apt to be flurried, showed all the signs of being violently agitated and disturbed.

"Chief, I'm going ashore at once. There'll be —— loose tonight if they get hold of young Dickie! I'm in dead earnest, chief; it's a matter of life and death. And —— the second mate!"

And so fierce was the second engineer's voice, so serious his expression, that the chief was prepared to believe whatever he told him.

"Weel," he said. "What is it?"

The second engineer was putting on a clean collar in front of his looking-glass over the wash-basin. He spoke not to the chief himself, but to his reflection.

"Three nights ago Dickie had a row with a Dago who was rough-housing a girl, trying to make love to her and scaring her. A nice enough girl, but she could take care of herself, I bet. Dickie had danced with her at Kate's about an hour earlier. See! He knocked the Dago down. When the Dago tried to knife him he knocked him down again. And this Dago, the Scorpion they call him, thin-faced man with a big nose, said next time he came ashore he'd kill him. He meant it too. Now do you understand? I'm in a —— of a hurry, chief! Sorry."

He slipped into his jacket.

"I see," said the chief. "If ye'll wait yin secon', I'll come wi' ye, Tommy."

He opened the door of the room.

"What about old Ironfist—him and his bridge?"

"Och, aye, him! I ha'ena eskit him yet whether he wants to play."

DICKIE and the second mate sat at a table at the end of the café near the door by which they had entered. Lucy, the same waitress who had served them before, brought them the drinks they ordered. She looked at them curiously as if she were scared or troubled, answered the second mate's cheery inquiries after her health and the health of an entirely fictitious mother whom he professed to have met earlier in the evening, and then with scarcely a smile left them.

The second mate chuckled, not in the least put out.

"That girl—she's mad about something, Dickie. Did you notice? I bet there's more rows in a joint like this in a week than there is aboard the *Askelon* in a year."

"Don't believe it!" said the boy moodily.

He leaned forward.

"Jack, there's Nina!"

The girl made her way swiftly between the tables toward them. Without so much as a smile on her lips she bent down and began to speak in a whisper.

"What you want here? Did not I tell you, keep away? You do not know—you do not know!"

She tapped with her knuckles on the table in her impatience.

"Get away from here! I tell you it is ver' dangerous! Did you not onderstan'?"

The second mate, serious for once, studied her with growing uneasiness. She

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was not acting. In her eyes was stark fear. She glanced over her shoulder. Kate in her black satin and her diamonds was approaching.

The girl broke into a laugh that sounded a little too light-hearted and rollicking to be true. She stretched out her hand, ran her fingers through Dickie Harron's yellow hair and said:

"Oh, yes, you sailors, you talk, you say zings, don't you, eh? But do you mean zem?"

She turned quickly with upraised eyebrows, as Kate touched her on the arm, as if she had not known she was near; and then shivering suddenly, she gave the second mate a look that was an earnest appeal either to beware of danger or to go as soon as he could, or a warning at least.

Kate smiled blandly.

"Good evening."

She talked her native English, not her pretended, garbled idiom that she used for trade purposes.

"'Ow are you? All right, eh? Always glad to see any one from the *Askelon*."

She patted Dickie Harron's hand.

"You like this little girl, don't you? But she's not English. English girls are the prettiest, ain't they?"

She broke into a series of deep chuckles which, like the girl's laughter of a moment before, sounded forced and unreal.

"Where's that other fellow, the dark one, eh?" she asked then.

"He's on board ship," said the second mate. "He wouldn't come."

And as he spoke with a smile on his lips, he was searching his mind for a clue to the mystery of Kate's café. In spite of her air of friendliness and her laughter there was something wrong. Kate was hostile; her eyes reminded him of the eyes of the Scorpion.

"Oh," said Kate. "I'm sorry for that. A nice young feller."

She tapped the white flesh of the girl's neck with the tips of her fingers and smiled her smooth smile.

"Dance," she said.

She swept a quick glance at Dickie.

"Ask her to dance, eh? Why not? Yes, of course. But, remember! Nina's in my charge. Understand? I'm particklar she don't come to no 'arm."

With a little chuckle that rumbled deep down in her bosom she turned and waddled away.

The girl looked tired, she drooped, her shoulders sagged, her slim figure seemed limp. Dickie stood up.

"I believe you're fagged."

"Fagg'?" she said, raising her eyebrows once more. "How you mean?"

"Tired! I was going to ask you to dance; but it doesn't matter. Sit down and talk."

She took hold of his hand.

"Come," she said, "You dance wit' me, eh?"

"Won't be long, Jack," said the boy. "You don't mind, do you?"

"Go ahead," said the second mate. "Of course not!"

He sat at the table, resting on his elbow. He watched the men and the women at the other tables and listened to the chatter of voices and the laughter and the music of Kate's orchestra playing rag-time that he remembered having heard years before in some other dance-hall on the Pacific Coast, the other side of the world. And as he waited for Dickie to come back to him he found himself observing and noting details that might perhaps have meant nothing at all, had he not in some mysterious way, from the moment he had entered the café, felt the presence of danger.

The waitress set down a bottle of wine on the table in front of him. He was surprized.

"What's this, Lucy? Haven't you made a mistake?"

"A praisent. I was tol' to breeng it you. You dreenk it. You no' pay nozin'. She tol' me."

"Oh," said the second mate. "A present, eh? From Kate! That's —— good of her, I must say."

The girl stood and looked at him with a queer, troubled expression in her narrow eyes.

"All right," he said. "*Grazie.* Good enough."

She nodded and left him.

The second mate slouched down in his chair as if already he had taken too much drink and considered, all his senses alert. That there was trouble ahead he was now positive. The signs were obvious. The wine for instance! Why should Kate have gone out of her way to make them a present of good liquor? And there was too much whispering among the girls, too many glances were cast at him.

He looked up suddenly. Kate stood at

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the doorway by the side of the platform. She was watching him with a frown, no longer smiling, very serious, sullen almost. When she saw that he had seen her she disappeared behind the curtain.

Dickie and the girl came back.

"Nina," said the boy, "would you like a drink? Don't, if you'd rather not, of course, but we'll have to buy something for the good of the house, won't we?"

"What do you make of this?" said the second mate.

He tilted the bottle of wine.

"Kate sent it to me as a present. What about that, eh? A present!"

"Have you dronk any?" asked the girl quickly.

"No," he said.

"Look zere!" said the girl.

They turned their heads. The bottle fell from the table with a crash to the floor and broke.

"Oh," said the girl. "Oh, how ver' clumsy!"

"Never mind," said Dickie. "Let's order another."

She stopped him.

"No, you wait. Let me—how you say it? I wanta t'eenk."

"Nina," said the second mate, "why did you knock over that bottle?"

The girl crimsoned. She was afraid, desperately afraid. Her smile was a pretense; she laughed and all of a sudden broke off with a catch in her throat.

"I am so clumsy," she said. "All ze people look at me an' laugh, eh?"

"Was it doped?" asked the second mate.

"I was afraid. Yes, I tell you—I was afraid. You dreenk da wine an' ver' soon you dronk! Look here—da two of you! Why not in God's name, you go? Oh, my God! it is terreeble!"

She bit at her lace handkerchief and it tore.

"Go, an' nevaire come back!"

"But that's silly," said Dickie.

The girl looked at the second mate.

"Take 'im away, or it is too late."

"But, Nina!"

Dickie laughed unsteadily.

"I don't understand. Too late for what?"

Tears glinted in the girl's eyes as she told him once more that he must go. She was doing all she could to save him, the second mate knew. The danger was real.

"You're a good kid," said Dickie.

"No," she said, "ver' bad! See? How can I be good? Deeckie, all da people here, zey are bad. 'Orrible!"

"But why stay here? You shouldn't be mixed up with a crowd like this, Nina; you know you shouldn't. And what's become of the Scorpion?"

"Oh, hush," said the girl and she covered his hands with her own. "Hush! You don' onderstan'. He is da wors' of all. I 'ate 'im!"

"Why don't you go home to your father and mother, eh, Nina?"

The girl gave a shrug of her shoulders, a reckless little shrug that expressed more perhaps than she could have put into words—into English at least.

"Nina," said Dickie, "what's going to be the end of you here? Be sensible."

And then the second mate saw the man with the thin face and the big nose, the Scorpion, come to the doorway opposite with Kate and stand half hidden by the heavy curtain, watching them. The second mate made no sign that he had seen. But the look in the Scorpion's face warned him that the girl had not overestimated the risk. The curtain dropped over the doorway.

"Dickie," he said, "we've got to go. The Scorpion and that old ——, Kate, have been staring at us, and if looks could kill you'd be a corpse this minute. I'm scared!"

The boy took the girl's hands in his.

"Nina, listen to me! I'm going to get you away from this, back to your own people. If it's money you want don't worry. I've got more than I know what to do with. Can you meet me tomorrow then—about half-past two? You're free then, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes. I am free zen—what you want me to do?"

"You know that open space where the statue of Columbus is?"

She nodded.

"Be there at half-past two. I'm going to ship you home, back to your people. You won't make any mistake, will you?"

There was a glint of tears in the girl's eyes as she answered.

"I will be zere. Zank you. You are ver' nice Deeckie—so nice I don' like to know you—you make me cry!"

She stroked his hand, smiled at him sadly and stood up.

"Mus' you be going, zen? Ver' good. You come again, eh?"

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The second mate, beyond astonishment by now, was also on his feet.

"Come on, Dickie; we've wasted time enough already."

The girl laughed a good-by and shook hands with them; then with a toss of her head and a wave of her arm she turned and walked off, with her strange swaying motion of slender body, toward the platform and the orchestra.

A man spoke to her from one of the other tables—called her by name. She flashed a smile at him and halted.

Dickie frowned.

"Let's get out o' here quick."

The second mate followed him through the curtained doorway. Kate met them in the bar that led out into the street.

"You going?" she asked with one of her benevolent smiles. "So early?"

They might have been her two dearest friends, so great was the sorrow she expressed.

"Anything wrong?" she asked.

They shook their heads.

"No," said the second mate. "Why should there be anything wrong?"

Kate still smiled.

"You'll be coming agyne, won't you?"

"No," said the third mate. "No, and don't you think it either. I tell you straight, this place of yours ought to be shut up—it's poisonous, like you! Come on, Mr. Trieve, let's get out into the fresh air where it's fit to breathe."

The benevolence in the woman's plump, flabby, painted face had vanished; her narrow eyes flashed a look of hate at him. For a moment she could not speak.

"You won't see me again," said the boy.

Kate steadied herself against the bar and began to laugh helplessly, holding her sides.

"You poor fool," she said. "I won't see you agyne—no. That's the truest word you ever said too. Blast you!"

A QUARTER of an hour after the second mate and Dickie had gone the chief engineer and the second engineer reached Kate's café.

As they stood in the long dance room just inside the curtained doorway, searching the crowded tables, a girl's voice spoke to them in English.

"Hullo! How you?"

The second engineer turned and recognized the girl with whom Dickie had danced three nights before and had later saved from the Scorpion. She smiled at them and held out her hand, and then spoke in a fierce whisper.

"Why you here, eh? Where is *he*, tell me!"

"Who?"

"Deeckie."

"Has he been here this evening, Nina?"

"Yes, he an' da secon' mate. I tell him zere is danger. Oh!"

She pounded the palm of her hand with her fist.

"You do not know! Go after him! My God, go or it will be too late!"

She glanced over her shoulder nervously, as if terrified. Kate was approaching. At once the girl broke into a babble of laughter.

"Yes, you come an' sit down, eh? You ver' kind. An' suppose I dance wit' you, eh? You like a drink firs' of all an' zen a dance! Oh yes, so ver' glad you come."

The chief engineer who had caught the infection of the second's anxiety shook his head but played up to the girl's lead.

"Anither nicht, I've nae doot, we'll be delightit. But we've no' the time the noo."

He turned to Kate.

"Good ev'nin'," he greeted. "We're lukin' fur oor secon' an' third mates, ma'm!"

"You remember them, don't you?" said the second engineer. "They were here with me three nights ago."

Kate gave a shrug of her shoulders.

"I 'ave not seen them," she said.

"You know who I mean, don't you?" said the second engineer.

She was lying, of course; the old——!

"Oh, yes," said Kate easily. "That young feller with the fair 'air—nice young chap, wasn't 'e? I do hope nothing's happened to 'im."

She opened her eyes very wide.

"That *would* be unfortunate, wouldn't it?" she ended.

"It would," said the second engineer grimly. "Very."

The conversation seemed to the chief to be dragging.

"Weel, if ye dinna ken whaur he is, we'll no' worry ye ony mair. Mebbe ye can tell us whaur we can fin' a thin-faced feller wi' a lang nose on him. What is't they ca' him noo, Mr. Oatfiel'?"

"The Scorpion," said the second engineer.

Behind Kate's back the girl clapped her

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hands to her mouth in what seemed an agony of fear.

Kate looked puzzled.

"The 'ow much?" she said.

And now her accent was frankly the accent of the East End, raw and unconcealed.

"'Ere, wot yer gittin' at, eh? The 'ow much? Scorpion?"

"Yes, the Scorpion," said the second engineer. "A feller with a thin face and long nose and eyes too close together."

"I'm sorry," said Kate, "but I don't know any one like that at all. No, I ighn't seen 'im rahnd 'ere, I'm sure."

She spoke sharply over her shoulder in Italian to Nina; then she turned once more to the two engineers.

"The girl 'ere, she ighn't seen 'im, either."

But the girl was shaking her head and motioning them to go.

"Funny nyme, that," said Kate. "The Scorpion, eh? No, I ighn't 'eard it before."

"Let's awa," said the chief. "Guid nicht, ma'm, an' thenk ye fur yer kindness."

"You —— old liar," said the second engineer, dropping all appearance of civility. "I saw you with him the other night talking to him."

Without waiting to hear Kate's torrents of anger the blasphemies and the denials that followed, he walked quickly away.

THE second mate was not happy.

"Why did you want to go offering to do things that are bound to bring trouble, eh?" he asked.

Dickie walked by his side frowning, hands in his pockets, silent and, so it seemed, angry.

"Dickie, why the blazes did you promise to send that girl back to her people, eh? What was the good of it?"

"Oh, I dunno."

"You're crazy," said the second mate.

"I'm not crazy," said the third, after a time. "But I couldn't see that girl there with Kate and that man, the Scorpion, making eyes at her and frightening her, without trying to help her."

"But why?" said the second mate. "Why?"

"Well, it was the girl I suppose," said Dickie. "What's a girl like that doing at Kate's café, eh? It's wrong, all wrong. There's good stuff in Nina, Jack—didn't you spot it?"

"You talk like a kid," said the second mate gloomily. "She needn't be there if she doesn't want, need she?"

"I dunno. Why have I stayed on the *Askelon*, eh? I don't like it, God knows! I needn't have stayed but I have stayed. For over a year! You get landed in a ship or a job, and you can't see a way out of it till something happens, and then it's easy. It's happened to me—I'm leaving at the end of the voyage. It's happened to the girl too. That's all!"

The second mate realized then that to argue with Dickie was impossible.

"And half past two in the afternoon," he said. "How d'you think you're going to stroll ashore that hour?"

"The mate will give me leave," said Dickie. "Best time for Nina anyway."

The second asked no more questions. Presently Dickie spoke again.

"Daresay you think I'm an ass," he said, "but the way I look at it is, the girl's in the hands of a gang of toughs and she ought to be got away from them while there's time. See? She's a good girl, Jack, but she's scared and she's ignorant, and she's landed herself in a scrape and doesn't know how to get out of it. She's all right now, I dare say, but think of another three months with old Kate or a year! My God! Jack, it's pretty awful, isn't it? Think of her mother not knowing and the girl afraid to go home and say that she's failed!"

The second mate sighed.

"One girl's very much the same as another at Kate's, I'd have thought, but I wish—I wish to Heaven, Dickie, you'd kept clear of the lot of them. They're a bad crowd to handle, —— bad!"

"There's nothing to be worried about," said the boy.

"Oh, I know that," said the second mate.

Nevertheless as they made their way along the crowded streets toward the waterfront and the Ponte Andrea Doria where the *Askelon* lay, he kept glancing uneasily from side to side, suspicious of all dark alleys and turnings and narrow doorways, and not until they had reached the harbor and the railway tracks and the ships could he throw off the feeling that they were being watched and followed, which was foolishness as he kept telling himself over and over again.

And then he began to breathe more freely.

"There's the old *Askelon* yonder."

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"Told you there was nothing to worry about," said the boy. "We might have taken it easy instead of racing along that way. No sense in it! I'd have liked something more to drink."

"Well, my lad, you can go on liking. You'll have it, as soon as we get on board—a mug of nice hot cocoa, with milk in it. There!"

"Funny, aren't you?"

They were walking along the quay in the pale moonlight, the dark water on their right, a row of empty box cars on their left.

The second mate stopped to tie his shoe lace.

"Won't be a minute!" he said.

As he straightened his back he saw a man emerge from between two of the cars and make swiftly toward the boy. Fear paralyzed his tongue. He managed to croak faintly as he ran forward:

"Dickie!"

His warning was too late. A knife flashed in the light of an arc lamp, and the boy sank to the ground with a groan. Before the man who had stabbed him could escape, the second mate had sprung at his neck. His foot slid from under him. They grappled and fell.

The second mate's one thought was the knife. The other man was on top. He must get hold of the knife or else he would die. He clutched fiercely at the upraised arm and grasped the cuff of the white shirt visible under the black coat-sleeve. The fingers of the man's left hand were pressing into his throat. He still held to the cuff. His right hand held the wrist of the hand that was choking him. He felt that his senses were going.

And then he heard some one in the distance shouting; he made an effort and wriggled sideways. The man with the knife was thrown off his balance; and the second mate, still clinging to the white shirt-cuff but the intolerable pressure on his throat removed, saw the thin face and the narrow eyes and the long nose of the Scorpion a few inches from his own.

There was a sound of tearing linen; the Scorpion slashed with his knife and was free. The second mate rose to his knees; his right hand closed on a lump of coal and he stood up weak and shaken. As the Scorpion staggered away he threw his coal at him with all his force and hit him on the head.

"Awfter 'im," shouted a voice. "Awfter 'im!"

Three dark figures disappeared into the shadows.

And then the second mate of the *Askelon* turned and knelt by the side of the boy who lay on his back, his white face turned to the sky, his eyes closed. Shivering, sick with fear, he fumbled with the boy's jacket and groped under his shirt for his heart. He could feel only the cold flesh and the blood. In sudden terror he stood up. Some one was approaching.

"Any one there?" he called. "Help!"

"All right, sir—we're comin'."

And then he saw three of the *Askelon's* hands, Leath, one of the sailors, and two firemen—Cledron, the old Welshman, and Heasen, the Cockney—stumbling toward him across the uneven ground in the darkness.

"We went after him, sir," said Leath. "But he dodged away."

"Is anything the matter, sir?" asked Heasen, taking a step forward toward the silent figure on the stones. "'Oo's that?"

"It's the third mate. That man knifed him. I think he's dead."

Old Cledron, the queer Welshman, was on his knees holding the third mate's hand in his, peering into his face.

"It will break his father's heart. Yess, the poor man! To lose his son!"

"Leath," said the second mate, "go you to the ship and see if the captain's aboard; if he is bring him here at once—or the mate, or the chief engineer if you can't find any one else. Only for God's sake make haste! You, what's your name, Heasen, go back to the town and fetch a doctor—hard as you can now—ask the first person you come to."

When the two men had run off he found to his surprize that he was holding in his left hand a fragment of the sleeve of a white shirt and the cuff.

THE chief engineer and the second had left Kate's a quarter of an hour after the second and third mates had set out for the harbor. Although at first the chief had been inclined to think that the second was worrying without due cause he now felt that he had not been nearly as worried as he ought to have been. That for some unknown reason the third mate was in danger seemed clear. The girl had

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said she had been talking to him and had told him to get back to the ship as soon as he could, yet Kate herself had denied having seen him. She had lied also about the man whom they called the Scorpion.

"A good lad," said the second engineer suddenly.

"Aye," said the chief. "I wish to —— I cud mak' that fayther o' his see hoo guid an' hoo fine he really is! He's a feckless young loon furbye, rinnin' his heid into trouble wioot a thocht, but he's a lad ony man wud be prood o' ca'in' his son."

"I dunno what's come over the second mate," said the second engineer. "Jack saw the Scorpion try to knife him, yet he goes with him to Kate's. He must be daft!"

As they were making their way across the railway tracks toward the Ponte Andrea Doria, a man came hurrying toward them at a run.

"Who the —— is this?" said the second.

"Hi," shouted the man. "Where can I find a doctor?"

"It's Heasen! What the devil do you want a doctor for?"

"Mr. Oatfield," said the man, "the third mate's been killed. The second mate sent me off for a doctor."

The chief grabbed hold of his shoulder and spun him round.

"Whaur are they? Quick!"

"Keep straight on; you'll find 'em by the railway tracks."

The second mate, who was kneeling with old Cledron by the boy's side, stood up as the chief and the second engineer reached them.

"He's not dead," he said in a hoarse voice. "Not yet anyway."

He broke off with a sob.

"Oh, God! and it's my fault!"

The chief, horrified by the sight of the boy lying so still and helpless, was yet touched by the misery in the second mate's voice.

"Dinna tak' it to heart, Mr. Trieve, it canna be helpit the noo."

He knelt down opposite Cledron. The boy was unconscious, his eyes were closed, his face was white, his jacket was thrown open and there was blood on his shirt.

"Hoo did it happen?"

"The Scorpion knifed him!"

"Ma God," said the chief.

And then for a time he found speech impossible. A lump came to his throat; there were tears in his eyes. Poor, poor Dickie. Perhaps he was dying at that very moment. And there they were, four of them, doing nothing! He raised his head.

"Ha'e ye foon' the woun'?" he whispered.

"Yess," said Cledron. "But he is bad, poor lad."

"We've stopped the bleeding," said the second mate.

"Jack," said the second engineer, "why did you let him go ashore? Didn't you know that the Scorpion would watch out for him and try and get even for that licking of his, eh?"

The second mate uttered a little choking cry, half in protest, half in acknowledgment.

"I'm not trying to make out it wasn't my fault," he said. "I ought to have had more sense. But the other night I was drunk, Tommy, and it wasn't till this evening at Kate's I saw there was any danger. A fight's a fight—how did I know that he'd try and kill him?"

The second engineer wished he had said nothing.

"That's all right, Jack. I shouldn't worry. It might have happened anyhow, whether he'd gone ashore or not."

Presently they heard quick footsteps, and Ironfist stood in front of them bareheaded in the light of the arc lamp. The mate, wearing an overcoat over his pajamas, a uniform cap and slippers, was with him.

"Well," said Ironfist. "Well, Mr. MacLeston."

The chief rose to his feet. He felt more grieved and sorry for this stern, hard man than he had ever felt for any one else in his life.

"Captain Harron," he said, and it was difficult to keep his voice steady; "I'm afeart that you maun prepare yersel' for a shock.

"Is he dead?" said Ironfist harshly. "Is he dead?"

The chief was all of a sudden angry. A wave of disgust at the man's hardness of heart swept over him. Why couldn't he show some feeling? Why didn't he do something?

"No," he said. "He's no' deid."

And then the father dropped on to one knee and with his arms folded on his other knee waited by his son's side, staring with grim earnestness at the white face. By no

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change of expression did he show what thoughts he was thinking. He might have been made of iron. He was a monster. Terrible in his impassiveness.

But at last, almost calmly so it seemed, he spoke.

"Has any one gone for a doctor?"

"Has ony yin gaun fur a doctor!" said the chief in a fury. "What like o' men dae ye think we are?"

Ironfist nodded.

"We mustn't move him till he comes."

There was another long silence. Nobody stirred. Then he spoke again:

"Does any one know how it happened?"

"Yes," said the second mate dully. "I do. I was with him. Three nights ago Dickie thrashed a man called the Scorpion. Tonight we were ashore together again; the Scorpion knifed him. I hit him on the head with a lump of coal, but he got away from me. This is a piece of his shirt sleeve I tore when we were scrapping."

The hand that still held the piece of linen was covered with blood.

"Are you hurt?" asked Ironfist in the same harsh voice.

The second mate was staring stupidly at his hand.

"I never knew that he'd cut me," he said.

After that a long time passed before any one spoke again. Ironfist and old Cledron, the fireman, still knelt on either side of the boy; but whereas Cledron held his hand and in many small ways, by little touches and adjustments of his clothes and the coat he had put under his head, showed that he was worrying about his comfort, the father remained motionless, his arms still folded on his knees, his face as hard and stern as when on board the *Askelon* he had found fault with him. Leath, the deck hand, had come back with the bos'n and the carpenter. The third engineer, the steward and the donkeyman arrived one after another. In the background were others of the crew watching.

And at last Ironfist rose to his feet and stood looking at the men waiting.

"Come here," he said. "All of you."

When they had gathered around he asked: "Is there any one here who's not from the *Askelon*?"

"No, sir," said the mate. "All our men, sir."

"Listen to me," said Ironfist. "There'll be no talking about this, d'you understand! No publicity. We'll have to inform the police, we'll have to tell them what's happened, but no more! I don't want you to say a word about any particular man being suspected. You, Mr. Trieve, do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," said the second mate.

"Don't say a word to any one what you've said to me. You saw no one! When the police ask tell them some one knifed the third mate in the dark, but you didn't recognize him and don't know who it could be."

The chief listened and made no comment. But he wondered what crazy motive was working at the back of Ironfist's mind. Dickie was dying, if not dead; the second mate had seen and fought the man that had knifed him. Why, in God's name, shouldn't they tell the police and have him arrested? Was Ironfist what so many others had said—so cold blooded and cruel he did not care whether his son lived or died? Impossible! No one, not even Ironfist, could have sunk so low! It was typical of him though that even now he should still refer to him as the third mate!

And then men from other ships began to arrive, and ask questions and stand around in groups chattering. Ironfist told them roughly to keep their distance and not talk. They waited under the arc lamp in awed silence until Heasen, the fireman, came back with a doctor and two policemen and a straggling crowd from the waterfront.

IV

THE second mate of the *Askelon* sat in a corner of a small café with a glass of lager beer on the table in front of him, and brooded. Once more he had landed himself into trouble through his own fault.

"Hullo," said a voice. "It's the second mate."

He looked up startled and saw the chief engineer and the captain. They seated themselves at his table without a smile on their faces.

"Where have you been, Mr. Trieve?"

The second mate gulped. As well acknowledge the truth at once without prolonging the agony.

"Kate's," he said.

And now, —— him, he knew!

"Oh," said Ironfist, staring at him from

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under his heavy brows. "And why did you go there?"

"I thought," said the second mate. "I thought——"

His mind worked slowly as he hesitated. How the —— was he going to tell the old man that he had been trying to find the girl Dickie had promised to meet early that afternoon to arrange for her going home? He had had trouble enough already without that! And then with cold despair he realized that if he told him the other reason for visiting Kate's, trouble was every bit as inevitable.

"Well," said Ironfist.

"I thought, sir, if I went to Kate's café I might be able to find that man who knifed the third mate last night."

Ironfist's mouth hardened. A waiter came and asked what they would like to drink.

"Three lagers," said the captain. "You'll have another, Mr. Trieve, of course!"

The second nodded his head. He felt miserable and unhappy. In a moment he would have to meet the full force of the old man's wrath without hope of escape.

The waiter hurried away.

"I told you," said Ironfist in his cold voice, most cold when he was most furious, "I told you I didn't want any steps taken that would lead to the man being suspected. Why did you disobey my orders?"

"I disobeyed no orders, sir. I did nothing that would lead to any one being suspected. But I saw the Scorpion stab the third mate—I saw him as plainly as I see you now, sir. I wanted to knock his —— head off, that's why I tried to find him. All you said, sir, was that you didn't want anything said to the police."

He stopped. There was a short pause. Then Ironfist grunted.

"All right," he said.

The waiter brought them their drinks. Ironfist paid and waved him away.

"We'll let it go at that then, Mr. Trieve, but please understand I'm not going to have any more trouble. I'm going to let things take their course. Do you understand? When I need cooperation from you I'll ask your assistance. Not before!"

—— him! —— him! The man was a swine, a hog!

The chief engineer knew what the second mate was suffering. He too had given up hope of ever understanding Ironfist's motives in wishing to shield the Scorpion.

"Did ye see auld Kate?" he asked.

"I did," said the second mate. "I had a row with her. She tried to clear me out of the place, she and two roughneck waiters of hers."

He smiled at the memory.

"I got hold of a bottle and threatened to smash it over their heads and that sobered 'em down a bit."

Ironfist grunted.

"I shouldn't make more trouble than you actually need, Mr. Trieve, not at present!"

"How is the third mate today, sir?" said the second mate.

Ironfist looked at the chief, who answered.

"They said at the hospital when I gaed there that he was unco weak. I cudna see him, o' course!"

"Is zat Deeckie you spik of?" said a voice.

The girl, Nina, for whose sake Dickie had fought the Scorpion slid into a chair at their table. Her small face was very pale; she looked worn out and frightened. She wore her big gray cloak over her black frock, and on her dark curly hair was a soft round cap of scarlet cloth like a tam-o'-shanter with a long tassel that reached her shoulder.

The chief engineer and the second mate glanced at each other in amazement. Then they looked at the captain, leaning back in his chair frowning.

"Tell me how is Deeckie! I want to know."

"Vera weak," said the chief with a helplessness that he could not hide.

"Zen he is still alive," said the girl.

Her dark eyes filled with tears. For a time she said nothing. Then she nodded toward the chief.

"I saw you—you an' him."

She nodded at Ironfist.

"I come after you," she added.

"Who is she?" asked Ironfist.

"She's a girl Dickie knew—a dancer," said the chief a little uncomfortably.

In cold blood the story would not satisfy; and yet it was the truth.

"She warned me yesterday when the second engineer an' I were tryin' to fin' him that there was danger."

"Yes," said the girl, clasping her hands together. "Yes, he save me da ozzer night from da Scorpion."

She turned to the second mate.

"I told you, sir, that the third mate

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had had a fight. It was to help this young lady, sir."

Ironfist scratched his chin and frowned.

"What's the third mate to do with you?" he said.

He spoke to the girl. In his voice and manner scorn and annoyance mingled. The girl studied him from between half-closed lashes. She made a little gesture of despair.

"An' who are you?' she asked. "You spik to me ver' cross. I do not care. I have suffer too much. Deeckie, he was da only one at all zat was kin' to me. Zis morn' zey tell me he is 'urt, an' I am sorry for him. I tell him last night to tak' care, but he will not listen. What is it to do wit' you? Zese—" she indicated the chief and the second mate with her outstretched hands—"zese are my frien's. What for do you ask me about Deeckie, eh?"

"I am his father," said Ironfist.

The girl looked at him in surprize and horror, and then impulsively she stretched out her hand and caught hold of his and said in a little, trembling voice from which all the anger had vanished:

"You are ver' proud of such a son."

Ironfist withdrew his hand.

"Well," he said gruffly, "you've not explained."

"I tell you," she said, "I am in danger. Yes. An', Deeckie, he say to me, he will save me. Perhaps you like to know."

Very quickly, stumbling over the long words, she told them the story she had told Dickie, from the time she had run away from her home to go on the stage.

"Zere was no one like Deeckie," she said brokenly. "He help me ver' much. He said I mus' get away from Kate an' da Scorpion!"

She shuddered.

"He would make da arrangement, he said, everzing; zere was nozzing, he said, nozzing to be afraid of. It was better to go 'ome zan to stay here. Zis afternoon he was to meet me, to tell me what I mus' do. Leave all to him! He will arrange. An' now zey say he is dying!"

She choked.

"He is nozzing to me, an' I am nozzing to him, but he is da bes' man zat I ever knew. An' now zere is nozzing. Nozzing excep' da Scorpion, an' I would die razzer zan 'ave him touch me wit' one finger! Zat is da trut'. I weesh I was daid!"

The chief sighed.

"An' wha was it stabbit Dickie?" he asked.

The girl looked terrified.

"I do not know. Da Scorpion, I zink. Do not talk so loud. Someone may hear."

None of the three men spoke. She looked at each of them in turn wistfully. And then she dabbed at her eyes with a rather grimy handkerchief and stood up.

"I am going."

The chief put out his hand.

"Nae," he said, "it mauna be! Sit ye doon, lass, an' dinna be in tae great a hurry."

He glanced uneasily at Ironfist, who stared at the marble topped table, his face like granite. A sudden rage gripped him. Why didn't he speak? Couldn't he realise that it was for this girl's sake that his son had been knifed and perhaps killed? He had wanted to save her from what would be worse than death. And the father, hating his son, would allow the girl to go out of his own life without raising a finger to help her!

The second mate roused himself.

"Dickie said he'd see that she was sent home," he said. "She's right in that anyway."

"Why?" said Ironfist sharply.

"He said—said he was sorry for her mother."

Ironfist said nothing.

"Luk here," said the chief. "Ye mauna gang beck to Kate's, lass. Ye mauna gang onywhaur neir if ye can help it! Can ye manage that for the nicht?"

The girl nodded.

"Weel then, tomorra we'll see what's best to be dune. But, we'll no desairt ye! Whaur can we fin' ye the morn's morn?"

"Tomorrow morning," translated the second mate.

"Ha'e ye a place whaur ye can bide the nicht?"

She borrowed a pencil from the second mate and wrote the number and street of a house on a slip of paper.

"I will wait zere zen till I hear from you."

She was like a child, very forlorn and frightened, clutching at any comfort however faint and feeble. She rose to her feet once more, a little smile on her lips.

"Zank you," she said.

"Wouldn't you like a drink?" said Ironfist gruffly. "Some coffee, anything?"

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She shook her head.

"There's no chance o' the Scorpion seein' ye, is there?" asked the chief.

"He is hidin'."

"Whereabouts?" asked Ironfist.

"Zat I cannot tell."

She frowned and bent forward, resting her hands on the table.

"But zere is two people who will know—Lucy, ze waitress at ze café, is one of zem. She will know. She will mak' it her business to fin' out. Once the Scorpion say he love 'er an' promise to marry 'er an' zen he laugh at her an' she 'ate him!"

"And the other?" said Ironfist.

"Kate!"

"She told me she didn't know where he was," said the second mate.

"Zen she is lyin'," said the girl.

"How do you know?" said Ironfist.

The girl laughed.

"Because da Scorpion is her son, zat is why!"

Next day when the chief engineer went to the address written on the slip of paper to tell the girl that they had arranged to send her home to her mother, he was told by the landlady, an elderly woman with a loose plate of false teeth that clicked when she talked, that she had left early in the morning and would not be back.

IF THE captain of the *Askelon* had in the past been unknowable, he was now more of a mystery than ever. In all his dealings with the authorities he showed no sign of anxiety or anger, only a grim acceptance of facts.

On board the *Askelon* his manner was accepted as merely one more proof of his hardness of heart. He simply, to put it plainly, did not care what became of his son.

That he had insisted on Dickie being taken to a private nursing home, the most expensive in Genoa—more than one of the officers had heard him use that particular form of description to express his wants—meant little more than that to cover his own indifference he was willing to put his hand into his pocket and spend the money.

But had he cared, had he been touched or affected in the very slightest, he would surely have uttered some word that might have been construed as sorrow or a wish to punish the man who had knifed his son.

Nothing moved him. When he was told that the girl, Nina, had vanished from the address she had given and was not to be found, he expressed neither surprize nor regret.

The chief engineer's tolerance of the man turned to loathing. For some days he managed to avoid meeting him, and then early one morning after breakfast he saw him approaching along the bridge-deck.

"Mr. MacLeston," he said, "I've had a message from the third mate. He'd like to see you as soon as possible."

"See *me!*"

"Yes. If you can spare the time maybe you'd better run up and see what he wants. They say he's sinking fast."

"God Almichty, man! Wy not yersel', then? He's sinkin', ye say! An' ye staun' there tellin' me that, eskin' me wull I gang an' see him! What fur wull ye no' gang an' see him yersel'?"

Ironfist frowned.

"I think not," he said. "Too busy. Tomorrow will just about see the last of the cargo out, and I want to sail as soon as we can! There'll be a good many things to attend to this morning, of course. No, it would be better for you to go, Mr. MacLeston, if you could find the time—much better in every way!"

"Och, aye, I cud fin' the time richt enoo'! I'll gang, sir; I'll gang jist as sune as I can change ma claes!"

In a bare room with blue-washed walls, a lofty ceiling and big open windows, looking out over a garden full of fig-trees and tall cedars and sweet-scented flowers toward the blue sea, the third mate of the *Askelon* lay dying.

The chief engineer, entering on tiptoes, was shocked by the change in him. His face was white, his eyes were sunk into his head, his cheeks were hollow.

"Chief," he said in a low voice. "They've not told me, but I know. I'm going west fast!"

"Dear lad," said the chief.

He choked, and blew his nose vigorously.

"I did my best."

"Aye, ye did yer best!"

"He hates me, he always has. But, chief, I didn't hate him!"

He was talking about Ironfist, the chief knew.

"Dickie," he said, "wudna ye like to see him?"

"No," said the boy. "I couldn't stand it. He doesn't care, does he?"

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And what else could a man do but make little protesting sounds deep in his throat and pretend that nothing was further from his mind than that? There were tears in the plump little Scotsman's eyes as he listened. Poor, poor Dickie! Poor boy!

"He's hated me always as far back as I can remember, treated me like nothing at all, despised me, and I never knew why! But it doesn't make any difference now, chief, does it? I'm going, and I'm glad. But if he's sorry, chief, if he says anything about wishing he'd been kinder, you might tell him I didn't hate him, will you! I did sometimes, of course, when I was mad with him, but not often! You'll tell him, won't you?"

He closed his eyes and for some time lay without speaking. The chief bent forward.

"Dickie," he said.

The boy looked at him.

"Chief, there was a girl I'd promised to help. I licked a man because he was treating her badly. A man who was as bad as any man could be, chief. I told her I'd send her home to her mother. She's a good girl, chief, but she got mixed up with a tough crowd. You understand, chief, don't you? Nina's her name; you'll find her at Kate's—Catarina's. Ask the second mate. Get her home to her people—will you, chief? I promised her."

And how was a man to tell a dying boy that the girl he had been going to help had vanished—completely—and was now God only knew where! Back in the clutches of Kate and the Scorpion perhaps! Impossible of course! Better a lie than to leave him worried and miserable in his last hours on earth.

"I'll luk after her, Dickie—ye need ha'e nae fears."

The door opened and the nurse came into the room. The chief stood up.

"Good-by, old chief," said the boy faintly. "Good old chief! I used to tease you, didn't I?"

The chief patted the thin hand, and then, unable to speak, turned and went quickly away, tears streaming down his round, red face.

When he reached the *Askelon* he saw Ironfist on the bridge-deck, talking to the mate. The chief was going to his room without speaking when he heard him call. He halted, fighting down the contempt he felt.

Ironfist dismissed the mate with a curt nod and came slowly toward him.

"Chief," he said, "if all be well we'll get away tomorrow afternoon. Tonight I shall want you in the town on a matter of business."

The chief was astounded.

"A matter o' business," he said. "What way?"

"I can't tell you now, but it's important."

The cold eyes stared at him as if daring him to ask further questions.

"Most important," repeated Ironfist.

"Weel," said the chief, "I'll gang if ye're needin' me. But——"

And then he flared into one of his rare spurts of fury.

"But, Captain Harron, listen to me! What like o' man are ye? I'm this meenit come frae seein' yer son, Dickie, an' ye ha'ena the common decency—the humanity—to esk whether he's deid or alive. I tell ye, captain, an' I'm speakin' the truth, I dinna ken anither man in the whole warl' that wudna ha'e shown mair furgiveness an' Christianity nor yersel'! Before God, I'm ashamed o' ye!"

Ironfist's face had turned a dusky red. He seemed on the point of answering fiercely. Then he gave a shrug of his shoulders and said:

"Well, Mr. MacLeston, and how is he?"

"It's jist as ye tellt me this morn', he's sinkin' fast."

Without waiting for any comment he swung round and walked off in the direction of the engine room.

THE night was bitter; light clouds covered the stars and moon; a cold wind blew from the southeast.

The chief was puzzled, irritated and even anxious. He gathered that Ironfist, who walked by his side at such a rate that he had difficulty in keeping pace with him, had no wish to reveal the reason for this journey through the streets of Genoa at midnight. His silence, his gruff answers, his stern look, made speech impossible.

But why couldn't he say what was in his mind? Was he afraid to trust him? Was he afraid that his plans would miscarry if he talked? The man was a fool! And yet Ironfist was not a fool, the chief knew; there must be some urgent need for action that would drag him away from the ship without apparent cause so late at night.

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And so when a girl with a shawl over her head and shoulders stepped out from under an archway and with a nod to Ironfist walked quickly in front of them, the chief felt no more than a passing bewilderment.

"Wha's thon?" he asked.

"One of the waitresses at Kate's," was the amazing answer. "Lucy, they call her. She's helping us."

"Helpin'," said the chief. "Dod, what next?"

After that there was silence between them once more. Five minutes went by, and then the girl halted at the corner of a steep flight of stone steps that led up the side of a hill from the narrow street between tall, dark houses connected at intervals by archways.

"It is zere," she whispered. "Zere! You see zat 'ouse? Ze zird 'ouse on ze lef'?"

She pointed.

"You go in zere, up ze stair, an' it is ze firs' door zat you come to."

"Will he be there?" asked Ironfist. "Certain?"

"You weel fin' heem. He has been 'ide—he ees back to ni'!"

And then without saying a word more the girl turned and hurried off, almost at a run.

Ironfist took out his watch.

"They'll wait till she's well on her road, then they'll join us."

"Wha dae ye mean?" asked the chief.

It was very cold. He had had a long, hard day, and he was tired.

"Wha else are ye expectin' this time o' nicht?"

For answer Ironfist touched him on the arm, and the chief saw crossing the street toward them a girl in a gray cloak and three men. When they drew near he recognized with a shock of surprize Nina. With her came the mate, the second mate and the second engineer.

"We're here, sir," said the mate. "What do we do now?"

And the chief knew by this that they too were in the dark, and for some reason or other he felt relieved in his mind.

"Is it here?" asked the girl.

"Yes."

Ironfist nodded.

"It's the third house on the left."

The girl peered cautiously around the corner, keeping herself hidden as far as possible.

"Oh! Zen he is back, eh? I knew zat zere was his 'ouse once."

"Isn't that where we saw you, Miss Nina?" aked the second engineer. "That night?"

She gave one of her little shrugs. "Yes. It was zere. I did not know 'e was back. He is ver' brave, eh?"

She looked at Ironfist.

"Ver' well, zen we do as we have plan. An' wheech is da room where he is? Zat I do not know. Did she tell you?"

Ironfist told her what Lucy, the waitress, had said.

"Ver' good! Now we go, eh? We mus' be queeck."

"Wait one minute," said Ironfist. "We can't afford any mistakes. I'm going first. The girl will go next. We mustn't move in a bunch. Chief, you and Mr. Rack follow as soon as she's in the doorway. And then, Mr. Trieve, you and the second engineer. There must be no noise crossing the stones."

He waited while three men came clattering past, singing at the tops of their voices.

"Fellers from one of the other ships," said the mate. "Drunk as boiled owls!"

"That helps," said Ironfist. "Listen, there's one more point. We must go upstairs in our stocking feet. All except the girl. D'you understand? Right!"

In the arched doorway of the third house, smelling of cold and damp, by the light of a dim electric lamp, the five men took off their boots while the girl waited.

When they were ready she nodded her head, put her finger to her lips and began to ascend the stone steps cautiously. The men, Ironfist leading, followed her. The sound of the girl's footsteps made an uncanny echo in the stillness.

The chief, knowing that they were hoping to find the Scorpion, felt a thrill of excitement stirring within him. He was a quiet man, peacefully disposed, but now he had an almost irresistible desire to dash ahead of the old man and the girl, thump at the door of the room and yell for the Scorpion to come out and fight him, man to man. He smiled grimly. He was dreaming again—seeing himself the hero—doing big things.

And then they stood on the landing. The girl advanced to the door at the head of the flight of stairs, marked in the darkness by a line of light that shone underneath, and tapped with her knuckles.

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There was no reply. She tapped again. The chief, afraid of losing his balance in the darkness, put out his hand and found comfort in the cold plaster of the wall.

Some one was approaching the door slowly and softly. After a pause a man's voice asked a question in Italian.

The girl began to knock more loudly.

"Carlo, Carlo, son io, Nina!"

Her voice was low and pleading.

"Aprite la porta, Carlo—per l'amor di Dio!"

She beat on the panels with the palms of her hands, pouring out a broken string of sentences, her voice vibrating with love and tenderness.

The man answered more clearly. Yet there were doubts still in his tone—doubts that might have come from his unbelief that such marvels could have come to pass. The girl spoke once more; and now she apparently was drooping with weariness and disappointment. There seemed a hint of tears close to the surface. She ceased her restless, eager tapping and sighed.

The door opened, at first no more than an inch and then wider. The girl, wrapped in a big cloak, held out her arms.

"Nina," said the man's voice. "Nina!"

"Carlo!"

The door was flung open. There was the Scorpion, his thin, ugly face beaming under a bandage, his eyes two slits of joy and greed, his lips a smirk. The girl entered and threw her arms around him. And at once the smile on the Scorpion's face faded to hate and horror. He struggled to free himself, but the girl held him tight. He hit at her body with his fist and wrenched one arm free. Then Ironfist seized his hand as he hurled the girl from him, and his knife dropped to the floor. The second mate caught hold of his neck, the mate and the second engineer pinned him by the legs, and he collapsed under their weight, wriggling and writhing like a fish caught in a net and just as helpless.

The chief, smitten by a kind of paralysis of will, stood motionless in the doorway, amazed at the scene played out before his eyes. He had meant to be first into the room, he remembered, and now he was last.

"Shut that door," hissed Ironfist.

The chief, abashed and bewildered, obeyed.

WHEN he looked round again, the mate was tying the Scorpion's hands with a handkerchief. The second engineer was holding his ankles; the second mate, grinning cheerfully, his hair standing on end, had one hand pressed on his neck; the other was clutching a handkerchief on his mouth so that all that could be seen of the Scorpion's face was his long, pointed nose and two fierce eyes under his bandage. The girl, her face flushed and triumphant, leaned against the wall smiling a rather tired smile.

"Well," she said, "zat is finish', eh? What you do wit' him?"

The Scorpion twisted his head and his mouth free from the second mate and began to splutter curses.

The girl laughed as the second mate silenced him.

"He call me names," she said. "My ——. Who care what he t'eenk? I tell you zat man, he is weecked! He is worse zan I can say. He would ruin me—like zat!"

She snapped her fingers.

"An' laugh at me an' talk, like he did Lucia an' da ozzers. You ask an' zey tell you! Sometime I t'eenk he is a fiend!"

Ironfist's gaze rested on her almost gloomily it seemed, and then he turned and looked down on the Scorpion; his thin lips twitched at the corners and there flashed into his cold eyes a flicker of what might have been amusement, so that the four men watching him closely wondered uneasily what wild thoughts were passing through his mind. They knew that with Ironfist appearances counted for nothing. He obeyed no rules; he was different from all other men! And so they waited for a reason that would explain why he should have come, so late at night with such elaborate precautions to take the Scorpion prisoner. That the Scorpion had killed Dickie, if Dickie were dead, was proved beyond a doubt. And yet they felt that it was not because Dickie was his own son that Ironfist had taken action against the Scorpion, but rather because he had lost one of his officers! What he had done to the Scorpion to-night he would have done just as willingly, as thoroughly, for any of them.

The room was large, lit by electric light and plainly furnished with a big wooden bed, a table and chairs, a dark wardrobe, a washstand and chest of drawers and some bookshelves. The walls were a plain pink color;

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the floor was cement covered by a carpet. At a glance there was nothing individual or distinctive about the room or its contents, until further inspection found the pictures, photogravures and photographs—of the type that may be found in the back rooms of many horrible little shops along the waterfronts of the world, pandering to the tastes of men like the Scorpion.

The chief strolled to the bookcase and with no particular end in view examined the first of the pictures; then he turned quickly away full of anger and disgust, all the dour Presbyterianism of his early youth in hot revolt.

"Thon man," he asked, "is no mair nor a ——"

He saw that the girl was watching him with scared eyes, and he broke off with a shrug.

"He's bad, onyway, rank—faugh! The place reeks o' him! Let's awa, Captain Harron, before we're asphyxiatit. I wundna ha'e thocht that ony man wud ha'e daurt ha'e in his possession the like o' thur pictures fur fear that his Maker shud strike him deid! Hech, sir! He's waur nor the brute creation!"

Ironfist knelt by the side of the Scorpion, who was by now gagged and trussed. He poured some liquid out of a medicine bottle on a white handkerchief, which he spread over the Scorpion's nose. A stuffy, sickly odor filled the room. The man's body heaved under the weight of the mate and the second engineer. Ironfist poured some more liquid on to the handkerchief. Presently the Scorpion ceased to move and lay perfectly still breathing naturally.

"Chloroform," said Ironfist. "He's asleep. And asleep he'll stay till we get him aboard ship if it doesn't kill him!"

"Aboard ship," said the mate.

"Yes, he's making the voyage on the *Askelon*."

It was in this offhand manner that the engineers and mates knew the reason for their midnight raid on the Scorpion.

Quickly they undid his bonds.

"We must have a hat for him," said Ironfist. "See where he keeps his."

The second mate opened the wardrobe door and found, not a hat, but a shirt with half of one of the sleeves missing.

"Gosh," he said. "Why, here's the shirt I tore the sleeve and cuff off!"

"Bring it along with you," said Ironfist. He fitted a hat with a turned-down brim on the Scorpion's head, hiding the bandage.

"Mr. Rack," he said, "you'll go downstairs, if you please, and give us warning if any one comes. Mr. Oatfield, you and Mr. Trieve between you must get this swine away out of here. As soon as we reach the street we'll help you. Mr. MacLeston, I'll ask you, please, to take charge of the young lady and see her back to her lodging. We don't want too much of a crowd, and she'll be safer with you than alone."

The Scorpion was only a lightweight; the second engineer slid his hands under his arms, the second mate grasped him around the knees, and between them they carried him out of the room and down the stone staircase. The chief and the girl came next. Ironfist switched off the light, closed the door and followed.

In the arched doorway that struck cold and damp the unconscious Scorpion was laid on the stones while the five men once more put on their boots.

"Mr. MacLeston," said the captain in a hoarse whisper, "as soon as you're ready I want you to go."

The chief was worried. He still felt that his share in the Scorpion's capture had been unworthy. He would have liked to help carry him. There was the risk of detection, the chance of meeting the police, friends of the Scorpion's or even Kate herself; while he would be walking quietly off with the girl! He wanted to raise objections, to protest, to refuse to do as he was asked. And then he glanced at the girl, waiting patiently, slim and frail-looking and white in her big cloak, and he changed his mind. What a confounded old fool he could be when he liked! —— it! The girl needed some one to look after her! How could they send her off at half past one o'clock in the morning by herself?

"A' richt," he said. "Miss Nina, if ye're ready we'll mak' a staurt."

A sudden fear struck into his mind.

"What wull ye dae if yer're stoppit by ony yin eskin' wha is it ye're carryin'?"

"We'll say he's a drunken Englishman," said Ironfist, "being taken back to his ship, and no one will give us a second thought."

From upstairs there came the sound of a door creaking on its hinges. They waited, not daring to move. Presently after an interval that seemed ages long the door closed again with a bang. Whoever it was that had

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heard noises in the night had been reassured by the stillness of the dark house.

"Go now," said Ironfist. "We'll follow."

"Zat is all, zen?" said the girl.

"Yes," came the answer, "and thank you. We couldn't have got him without you. I'm much obliged to you."

"Zat was nozzing. No! I did it for Deeckie!"

And then the girl and the chief engineer left the arched doorway and started off through the darkness, leaving the others to make their way down to the waterfront with the Scorpion, who would be only a drunken Englishman being carried back to his ship by four of his fellow-countrymen, all slightly the worse for liquor themselves and inclined to resent interference from outsiders, even the police.

The chief wanted to talk, yet scarcely liked to break in on the girl's silence. She was tired, he knew. In the light of the street lamps her face showed wistful and appealing; she looked like some child, worn out through suffering and without hope.

When they had reached a region of quiet streets on the hillside, at last the girl spoke to him.

"After zat day I see you in da café, did you go to da house I wrote on da paper?" she asked.

"I did sae," said the chief. "I gaed there a' richt, but the auld wumman tellt me ye'd gaun awa wi'oot sayin' a word!"

"Yes," she said. "Deeckie's fazer, he came an' took me—'e say he did not weesh any one at all to know what come to me. Because maybe Kate see me or hear I am steell in da town."

And again it came over the chief what an extraordinary man Ironfist was. He trusted no one, believed in no one.

"An' whaur did he tak' ye to?"

"To da house we are going now. Eengleesh people zat are frien's of his. An' zere I wait till 'e comes an' ask me will I go wiz him an' da ozzers to zat man's room——"

She shivered and wrapped her gray cloak more tightly around her slender body.

—"an' mak' him open da door. You onderstan', Meester MacLeston, I have to preten' I have come to 'im at last—zat I love 'im! He open da door."

She sighed.

"I am ver' tired tonight, Meester MacLeston. Deeckie, he is not yet daid, eh? Poor Deeckie!"

And then the girl halted.

"Zis is da house where I live. An' tomorrow morning ma mozer will be here. She is come to tak' me 'ome!"

"Yer mither," said the chief. "Then ye wrote to her? I'm vera gled."

She pressed one of the knobs by the side of the door.

"No. It was Deeckie's fazer who wrote. A vairy nice letter. It mad' me ashame when I read it. An' ma mozer she is come as queeck as she can, an' everzing is all right, an' I would be 'appy, only zat Deeckie, he is dyin'!"

She put her hands on the chief's arm.

"I pray for 'im all da time, an' I tell you, Meester MacLeston, ma frien', if I could save Deeckie by dyin' I would die mysel'. Tonight. He is da only man in da worl' zat has been kin' to me."

And then she gave a pitiful little laugh though she was crying.

"Leesten, do you want me to tell you da trut'? Only you mus' not tell. I have love Deeckie from da momen' I see him first an' dance wit' him! You onderstan'? He is ze only zat I could love. But it is impossible. I know. To him I am nozzing—someone zat he is sorry for! Oh, I know what you zink—I am not good enough. Zat is right—it is quite true. An' if Deeckie had live I would never see him again."

The door opened and she spoke over her shoulder.

"Zank you ver' much!"

She thrust out her hand.

"Good-by, Meester MacLeston. Tomorrow ma mozer come an' fetch me away, 'ome where I belong, an' I nevaire see you again—nevaire! Good-by, an' may God bless you an'—an' keep you!"

The chief felt the pressure of her hand in his. Then she turned and vanished into the house.

He reached the *Askelon* in time to see the Scorpion carried on board still unconscious.

"Did ye see the girl back to her home?" asked Ironfist wiping his forehead.

The chief glared at him.

"What dae ye think? That I droppit her at the first corner I cam' tae an' gaed aff fur a drink? Nae, I did what I was eskit to dae!"

"All right," said Ironfist. "I wanted to know, that's all."

He spoke to the two mates and the second engineer.

"Take him aft now, to the after peak!"

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THE last of the cargo had been discharged; the Blue Peter flew at the foremast. In another ten minutes the pilot would come aboard, and by one o'clock the *Askelon* would be out at sea bound for Constantinople.

On the bridge-deck, leaning against the rails, the chief engineer and the mate smoked their after-dinner pipes and stared at the city, white in the dazzling sunshine, and talked about home, the old man, the girl, the Scorpion, hidden in the after peak, and all that had happened since the night when the third mate had been knifed.

Only a short half hour before Ironfist had returned on board, bringing with him the news that the boy was dying. The doctor had said that it was impossible for him to live through the day. Only a miracle had kept him alive so long. Hopes that had risen faded with the passage of time.

"Poor Dickie," said the mate.

"Aye," said the chief. "Puir lad! But thon fayther o' his—he's incomprehenseeble! When he said that aboot Dickie gaun I was watchin' his face; it micht ha'e been mad' o' stane. Disna he feel onything?"

The mate, knocking the ashes out of his pipe against the rail, uttered a sudden exclamation of astonishment.

"Look yonder, chief. Isn't this Kate?"

The chief grunted as he recognized the stout, tight-laced figure in black satin and ridiculously high-heeled shoes pattering along the quayside toward the *Askelon*.

"Aye, it's Kate hersel'."

He pondered a moment, then he said: "Mr. Rack, gang you up to the auld man an' tell him. There's trouble afoot! She's efter the Scorpion!"

Kate climbed on board and came straight to where the chief was waiting. He hardly recognized her, so much had she changed. Her face, unpainted for once, was pale and haggard; in the clear light of the day her cheeks showed great masses of flabby flesh. There were yellowish pouches under her eyes; her large, sensuous lips, usually so pink, had an unhealthy, bluish tinge. In her black hair were streaks of gray.

"Where's the captain?" she asked in her flat voice. "I want to speak to him."

Ironfist came down the ladder from the lower bridge. Kate made for him at once.

"Captain," she said, "I want to speak to yer. In private!"

He surveyed her from under his knitted eyebrows, his lean face stern and hard and dominant, his hands in his pockets.

"Get off this ship," he said.

She clutched at him and he drew back a step.

"Mr. Rack," he said over his shoulder, "have this woman put on shore!"

She shrieked.

"Oh, for Gord's syke listen! Yer cawn't do it! Yer cawn't! Capting, wot've yer done wiv Carlo?"

"Carlo?" said Ironfist.

The mate had beckoned to the bos'n and one of the deckhands.

"One minute, Mr. Rack!"

He turned to Kate.

"Who the everlastin' blazes is Carlo?"

"My ——! Carlo—'e's gorn! No one can tell me wot's 'appened! I wanter know. Yer know wot I mean! W'ere is 'e?"

She stamped her foot in an agony of despair and clenched her hands.

"Tell me," said Ironfist, "who is Carlo?"

He spoke in a low, careless tone of voice as if nothing out of the usual were taking place, and yet those watching knew that he was in one of his most dangerous moods.

"Carlo," said the woman in sullen defiance, "'e's that feller they call the Scorpion!"

"Oh," said Ironfist. "And so you think I'd lower myself, do you, to have anything to do with a slimy —— like that? What's the Scorpion to do with me?"

"You know 'im," flared the woman. "You know 'im, yer cawn't deny it!"

"I've never spoken to the man in my life. But if you mean, do I know of him—yes. So does every one else. His name stinks on Genoa waterfront. He's a pest that ought to be locked up."

"An' that's wot you've done. You've locked 'im up! My ——! you cruel-'earted 'ound! Standin' there tormentin' me! W'ere 'ave yer put 'im?"

Her voice rose to a wail of terror. She held out her hands to Ironfist, tears on her baggy cheeks, her stout, tortured figure in its black satin, ludicrous and out of place on the *Askelon's* deck in the midst of that grinning, wondering crowd who watched her.

Ironfist stopped her with a sharp:

"That'll do, now! Pay attention and stop whining. What makes you think I'd go out of my way to touch the Scorpion?"

"You——"

And then a sudden look of fear crept into

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the small eyes. She drew back from Ironfist, her hands to her throat, and answered sullenly.

"I dunno. I thought——"

She made a movement to turn away from him.

Ironfist caught hold of her wrist and swung her round, face to face with him.

"Had he anything to do with knifing my son? Answer me that! If he had I'll take you ashore at once, to the police!"

"No! I swear 'e 'adn't! No, nothin'! But 'e's gorn. 'E's sick, Carlo is. Last night he was in 'is room; this mornin', 'e's gorn. In the night some one was carried aht o' the 'ouse by four men—they was seen! 'Oo else would want to tyke 'im but you, thinkin' it was Carlo knifed your son? But it wasn't 'im. 'E never touched 'im!"

"H'm," Ironfist grunted. "Seems to me, madam, you're letting your imagination run away with you. I wouldn't soil my hands touching carrion like him without good cause! You've had your answer. Now go! And let me tell you, the less you get mixed up with the Scorpion the better. He's no good!"

The woman gasped, stared into Ironfist's face and burst into high-pitched sobs.

"'E's my son, Carlo! Didn't yer understan'? My son! 'E didn't do no 'arm. I want 'im. If you didn't tyke 'im 'oo did? 'E's a good lad, Carlo. None better. An' 'e's gorn!"

"Pilot's aboard, sir," said the mate.

"Very good, Mr. Rack. Stand by. And you"—he spoke to the woman—"if your son didn't knife mine—and you're sure of that, aren't you?—then there's nothing more to be said. I won't detain you."

Kate turned away, crushed, forlorn, her finery all of a sudden a mockery, her head sunk in her shoulders so that she looked smaller, her eyes red with weeping, and groped her way blindly off the ship.

She had done much evil along the waterfront. She was a bad woman—a woman whose sins had made other women sinners in their turn, to be dragged down to her own level of shame and infamy, to be laughed at and sneered at and used for her own gain and when finished thrown to one side as outcasts. Now she was herself broken, through the one human virtue she possessed, the love for her son!

As the chief was about to enter the alleyway that led to the engine-room gratings, he turned, as sailors will when leaving port, to have his last look at the shore.

Kate, a black dot in the sunshine, stood on the white quay gazing at the *Askelon*.

For a moment he could almost pity her.

The poor woman! She had lost her son, whom she loved. He thought then of Ironfist and his son, whom he hated.

What was the difference between that wretched woman in black and the *Askelon's* captain?

Two sons, one hated, the other loved. Kate and the Scorpion, an assassin and worse! Ironfist and Dickie, as good and as clean a boy as there was in the world, and dying!

And then the chief swore at himself for a soft-hearted fool. The Scorpion had knifed Dickie. He was vermin!

Feeling ashamed of himself, the chief engineer climbed down the long steel ladders to the engine-room platform, just as the telegraph clanged the "stand by."

V

THE knowledge that as they were leaving Genoa Dickie was dying among strangers affected the mates and engineers of the *Askelon*, who had counted themselves his friends, more even than the thought of his death. Ironfist was a cur! Any other father would have been with his son up to the very last.

It was the mate who suggested that perhaps Ironfist's presence by Dickie's side might not have been much of a comfort after all. His hate would have shown itself even then!

The chief engineer's argument that Ironfist could scarcely have afforded to throw up his job was rejected with scorn. He could not have kept the *Askelon* from sailing naturally. But what was there to prevent him letting the ship sail without him? With the mate as master for the time being? The owners would never have kicked. Why should they? From common report they regarded Ironfist as being of more value to the firm than all their other captains combined.

"—— help the other captains," said the second engineer.

The mate said dryly that he wanted promotion and a ship of his own as much as the next man, but life wouldn't be much of a

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beano running the *Askelon* with only the second mate on the bridge.

The discussion, carried on in snatches usually as the watches were relieved, on the bridge or in the engine room or when the chief engineer and the mate happened to meet on deck, led nowhere.

Besides what of the Scorpion? Always there was the fact that in the after peak, hidden away from the crew, was the Scorpion. The Scorpion's presence on board was a mystery, impossible to explain.

The chief engineer was leaning over the starboard rail amidships, smoking his pipe and gazing at the full moon, copper tinted, shining in the clear sky, casting its reflection on the calm sea. He was thinking how strange it was that, in fine weather, with the engines running smoothly and easily, his spirits should be so low. How often in Winter gales, when there was neither sleep nor comfort to be had, when tempers were short, when the engines had to be nursed watch after watch and the propeller's racing checked, had he felt light-hearted and happy in spite of everything. And now he was sad and depressed and full of foreboding. The voyage had been cursed from the very start through the pride and selfishness and folly of one man! What the finish would be no one could tell!

He heard footsteps and saw Ironfist at his side, standing upright, staring out across the waters.

Neither spoke.

The chief continued to smoke and brood over the thoughts that came to his mind. Was there a harder man in the world than Ironfist Harron? He wondered. When had Ironfist ever shown himself thoughtful or considerate or charitable? Never once. Never. Was there any man, woman or child in the world whom he had helped? Not one! Not one, except—there was the girl, of course. Nina. Yes, Ironfist had been kind to Nina. Amazing, but true!

"Mr. MacLeston!"

Ironfist's voice broke the silence.

The chief took the pipe from his mouth.

"Sir?"

"Before we sailed I made arrangements for news to be wirelessed to me——"

"Dickie," said the chief sharply. "Dickie!"

"He's gone," said Ironfist.

And that was all the comment he uttered. His son was dead. He said no more.

The chief had a lump in his throat; everything before his eyes was blurred. He wanted to say how sorry he was, he wanted to offer his sympathy, but what was the good? Why should he throw words away uselessly? This man by his side had a heart of stone!

"A guid lad, Dickie," he said, after a time. "I tellt ye hoo muckle I thocht o' him. He'd ha'e mad' a fine man, ye ken—a braw, fine man—if he'd lived."

"Mr. LacLeston," said the father abruptly, "perhaps you wondered why I took the trouble to bring that man they call the Scorpion on board."

"I did," said the chief.

"You asked no questions, and I'm obliged to you. You've been very patient. If you'll do me the kindness, Mr. MacLeston, to be in the saloon in ten minutes' time——"

He frowned.

"No, not the saloon; I'll be —— if I pollute the ship more than I need. It's light enough on deck. On the poop, Mr. MacLeston, in ten minutes from now. Maybe you'll learn. Let me see, it's gone eight bells; whose watch is it in the engine room?"

"Mine. The fourth stands it."

"Right! Will you bring the second engineer along with you? Thank you."

ON THE poop of the *Askelon*, rising and falling gently in the light of the full moon, the Scorpion, white-faced and quivering with unknown terrors, was being tried for his life.

This was what Ironfist told him when he had been brought up from the after peak, without a trace of emotion in his stern voice.

"Simple, isn't it?" he said. "My third mate's dead. Through you. You knifed him!"

"No."

The Scorpion shook his head.

"No, no. It is a lie. I tell you, I have not seen him!"

"You're lying, of course. But it's no use. Lies won't help you here. If I'd handed you over to the authorities maybe you'd have lied yourself out of it altogether, or got off with a couple of years at the most. You're on trial for murder now just as if you were in the law courts."

The Scorpion stood near the Number 6 hatch. On his left was the mate; behind him by the quadrant was the second engineer;

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in front of him was Ironfist with the chief engineer and the second mate.

"Mr. Trieve," said the captain, "I won't keep you a minute as you've got to get back to the bridge. Do you recognize this man?"

"Yes, sir," said the second mate, "he knifed the third mate. I hit him on the head with a lump of coal. You can see the place now, sir, where he's bandaged. And this is a shirt, sir, I found in his room."

In one hand the second mate was holding the shirt, in the other a cuff and part of a torn sleeve.

"This piece of sleeve, sir, I had in my fist after we'd been scrapping and he'd got away from me. It fits on to the rest of the shirt, sir. Do you see? He's the man all right; I'd know him anywhere, without any proof but my own eyesight."

"You," said the Scorpion. "You —— liar! Oh, my——!"

"Drop that," said Ironfist. "You'll be having your turn presently. Nothing else, Mr. Trieve, is there?"

"No, sir, except I heard him say three nights before he knifed Mr. Harron he intended to kill him."

"All right, Mr. Trieve, away with you to the bridge."

The second mate left the poop unwillingly, to relieve the senior apprentice who was keeping his watch until his return.

"Now, Mr. Oatfield," continued Ironfist, "what do you know?"

"No more than the second mate, sir. I saw the third mate knock the Scorpion down, sir, for hurting that girl, and I heard the Scorpion say he would kill him. That's all, sir."

The Scorpion's face twitched in a spasm of rage.

"My ——! Lies, lies. I did not say I would kill him!"

"Do you deny you knifed the third mate?" demanded Ironfist.

The dark eyes, glaring at him so savagely, wavered and fell.

"We fight, him an' me—he try to kill me."

"Oh, I see! With his fist, eh? With his fists against your knife? What a liar you are!"

The Scorpion choked. He was finished. He must have known then that hope had gone. The chief engineer, watching him, thought of a cobra trapped, in its beady eyes the knowledge of death but waiting its chance still to plunge its fangs into its captor.

"Now, listen," said Ironfist, "you're as guilty of murdering one of my officers as if you'd been tried by a judge and jury. No need to say a word, there's no argument left. You know what I'm going to sentence you to, don't you?"

He put the question so suddenly, in so loud and menacing a voice, that the Scorpion flung up his arms as if to ward off a blow, backed against the hatch and whimpered for mercy, first in Italian, then in English:

"Do not—I tell you—you can not touch me—you would murder me, murder me for nothin'!"

Ironfist stared at him coldly and then smiled.

The mate, afraid that the Scorpion was going to fight, spoke for the first time.

"Take care, sir!"

But the Scorpion had no fight in him. He glanced swiftly left and right; and then before either the mate or the second engineer could stop him he had clambered over the hatch and was making for the break of the poop and the after well-deck.

"Good enough," said Ironfist. "He can't escape. Leave him to me, if you please."

And then along the decks of the *Askelon* in the moonlight there began a chase that could have only the one end, the death of the Scorpion!

The Scorpion, crazy with terror, ran along the starboard side of the after well-deck, and climbed the ladder to the bridge-deck. Ironfist, his hands in his pockets, went slowly after him. Apparently unconcerned, he gave those who watched him the strange impression that he was in his own mind Justice incarnate, swayed by no motives either of hate or revenge, impersonal and proof against any appeal for mercy.

Without a halt, glancing backward, the Scorpion plunged down the ladder to the for'ard well-deck. When he was half way up the ladder that led to the fo'csle head the look-out man came to the rail and stood peering down at him. He fell with a gasp of despair, audible even on the bridge to the second mate, and turned once more. Ironfist was coming toward him. The Scorpion uttered a wild yell, scrambled across the Number 1 hatch under the booms and ran aft on the port side of the for'ard deck. Without quickening his pace Ironfist walked after him.

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And then the Scorpion climbed the ladder to the lower bridge, flung open the door of the captain's room and came face to face with the steward, who hit at him. He backed with a screech and attempted to reach the flying bridge, only to be driven down by the second mate.

"Keep off o' here," he said. "Get down on to the bridge-deck!"

As though urged to obedience the Scorpion, babbling curses or prayers, it mattered not which to the men who heard him, made a dash for the port ladder, saw the chief engineer and the second, turned to the left and with slipping, helpless feet went clattering down the starboard ladder to the bridge-deck. He rose to his knees moaning like an animal. Ironfist stood six feet away from him, the light of the moon shining full on his face, revealing the stern lines, the fierce gaze and the set lips. He did not move. The Scorpion knelt before him doubled up, rocking to and fro from his hips and weeping.

"Get up," said Ironfist. "Up!"

The Scorpion stood up, shaking, choking, clawing at him with his hands.

"Back where you came from," ordered Ironfist.

The Scorpion limped slowly aft, his head bent, his shoulders rounded, his arms folded, past the bunker hatch, the Samson posts and the funnel and fiddley, past the side bunkers and the engine room casing, down the ladder to the after well-deck once more, past the Number 4 hatch, the winches, the mainmast, the Number 5 hatch, with Ironfist stalking behind him and the chief and the mate and the second engineer following, bewildered, silent, awed by what they were witnessing.

At the break of the poop the Scorpion halted but did not look round.

"Up," said Ironfist. "Up!"

He climbed the ladder. Again on the poop he halted. And now he turned his head.

Ironfist, on the poop also, motioned him toward the stern.

The Scorpion began to whimper, yet shuffled on. At the flag pole he halted once more, both hands clutching the upper rail, his body shaking, his knees bent.

The night was colder. The moon shining so vividly a moment before was hidden by a white bank of fog creeping across the sky. No sound broke the stillness of the calm night but the creak of the wheel-chains on the quadrant and the thrashing of the propeller, not quite covered by the water, and the steady thrum of the engines.

"Over," said Ironfist harshly. "No stopping. Over!"

The chief engineer and those who had followed watched in silent horror.

Trembling, gasping for breath, crying, the Scorpion, with death waiting for him beneath the counter, climbed the rail and then, balancing himself, clutching at the flag pole, made one last appeal for mercy.

"Let me go, for —— sake! I am not fit to die, I tell you. It is a joke, eh? It has gone too far! My heart, it is not good! I confess—I tell you! You let me go, I say the truth—for —— sake! *Oh, Maria!*"

He overbalanced, screeched, hung for a moment by some miracle, swinging his arms, and fell.

"Oh, oh!" said the chief. "He's gaun!"

He shuddered but did not move.

Ironfist walked to the rail and stood looking down over the stern.

He waited a while, a minute perhaps—perhaps two—then he turned and without a word to the silent group of men who had seen the end of the Scorpion walked slowly for'ard toward the bridge.

DAY dawned, misty, chilly, with a fresh breeze rising.

The death of the Scorpion had made a deep impression on the crew of the *Askelon*. Ironfist had done what was right. He had been cruel, of course, and brutal—he would be—but he had been just.

The chief engineer was for once disinclined to take a part in the gossip of the ship. The death of the Scorpion had not affected him. He deserved killing. But that Dickie Harron should have been slain by such carrion made him feel that there was no conceivable purpose in life at all—no meaning, no hope, nothing! All was despair, confusion, wasted effort, misery!

He was glad that the sun was no longer shining; the cold mist and the uneasy motion of the ship seemed more in keeping with his mood than blue sky and a calm sea.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon there came a knock at the door of his room. Ironfist entered and stood before him watching him intently, as if wondering whether he would be welcome or not. In appearance he was older by ten years; his face was the

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color of gray stone; his eyes, formerly so keen and clear, were red-rimmed and clouded. The lines in his cheeks had developed overnight into the gashes and seams of age. His frame even seemed to have shrunk; his shoulders were bowed; his fingers kept fumbling with his watch chain, a button on his waistcoat, his cap, his collar.

The chief studied him in shocked amazement.

"Wull ye no' sit doon, Captain Harron?" he said. "Try the arrm chair."

Ironfist nodded and seated himself. And then he began to talk in a low, uncertain voice without emphasis, very quickly, so quickly that at times the words ran into each other and became almost meaningless sounds.

"Mr. MacLeston," he said, "maybe you think I'm crazy. Maybe you're right if you do. You've been very patient in not asking questions, and I'm going to give you an explanation. I've reached the end of my rope. Something's bound to crack somewhere. Those cranks o' yours, hear 'em? I've that noise in my head, all the time. I've not slept a wink for about a week; and it's getting me!

"You were fond of Dickie, weren't you, Mac? You thought I hated him, of course. He thought I did, anyhow. I didn't. He didn't understand, that's all. I did my best. A good lad. I taught him, Mac, and I trained him. I was proud of him. So—— proud, Mac! But I never let him see what I felt. I couldn't. Something stopped me. And if I hadn't have been strict with him, Mac—if I hadn't kept telling myself that without being strict I'd have got nowhere, I'd have been soft. I'd have made a fool of myself, I loved him too much! That was the trouble, Mac—he was all I had in the world to love! I didn't want to let him out of my sight. I was jealous of the friends he made. Jealous of you even, Mac, because he went to you for advice and told you his troubles. Yes, I knew that, Mac! I knew everything about him. And he's dead!

"I'm hard, Mac, aren't I? You thought so—but I'm not, not really. It's surface hardness; I'm soft underneath. Soft as an old woman! When I was with Dickie I was afraid of myself. I was afraid of showing him by accident how much I cared! I was afraid to let anyone else see, either. Why? God knows, Mac! I must have been mad. I loved him and I made him so scared of me he came to hate me and despise me. And all the time inside me there's been something crying out, trying to force me to break myself loose from what was holding me back, and I wouldn't let go. I couldn't.

"His mother hated me too. She was afraid of me. I don't know how it began, Mac. I loved her, but somehow, just as it was with the boy, I couldn't show her my real feelings. I was all dried up inside. If I'd let her see that I cared she'd have thought me a fool! And it ended, Mac, after about four years. Dickie always imagined his mother died when he was a baby. She didn't. I came back from sea to find that she'd run away from me. She left me the boy. Queer that, wasn't it! But I don't know. Not when you come to think of it, it wasn't so queer. Dickie was my son as well as hers, and she hated me so much, she wasn't going to have Dickie with her to keep reminding her of me! The other man was a man like the Scorpion. When he'd done with her he left her! She's dead, now—five years ago—hard up—all by herself—unhappy! But she wouldn't come back to me. She wouldn't see me. I offered her money. She wouldn't take it. She'd rather starve. She did starve in the end. That's all! I had Dickie to look after. And now he's dead! I've wanted happiness all my life. I've never had it! Even as a little chap Dickie was afraid of me. I never will have it. And you all of you called me cruel, eh? I was, but it was only because of the love I had for him! I did my duty, and I made him hate me. If I had a chance of getting clear of it all tonight, Mac, I'd take it. I'm tired of having to live!"

Ironfist broke off abruptly.

The little chief sat huddled up on the settee, blinking his eyes and groping still in his mind for the solution of that great problem of existence that had baffled him for so long. He thought of Dickie, Nina, Kate, the Scorpion, and their dealings one with another and with Ironfist, so strong and hard, yet so weak and lacking in worldly knowledge for all his intelligence. He felt confused and troubled and even humbled at the thought of his own helplessness in the face of a sorrow that had broken down the reserve and repressions of the man watching him across the little room.

And then Ironfist rose to his feet.

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"Thank you, Mr. MacLeston, for listening."

He opened the door and went out.

After he had gone the chief shook off his feeling of despair and gloom. Perhaps it would have helped if he had given Ironfist that last message from Dickie—that in spite of all he had made him suffer his son had never hated him. Perhaps that would have brought him comfort.

OLD Cledron, the Welsh fireman, and Heasen, the Cockney trimmer, stood under one of the stokehole ventilators and talked.

"A bit queer last night, wasn't it?" said Heasen.

"Yess," said Cledron. "Yess. But I am sorry, look you, for that poor man!"

"Get orf it," said Heasen. "Not that feller wot stabbed the third yer don't mean, do yer?"

"I am sorry for him, yess. He was so ignorant. He did not know. Brought up like thatt! Years an' years ago, Heasen, I can remember his mother, Kate. She wass a pretty girl—Kate, and her mother wass bad. She had a house in Ratcliffe Highway, and in those days, Heasen, what a place to bring up a young girl! Her mother wass a bad woman. And so it goes, so it goes! But wass the mother bad? Who made her bad? So it goes, Heasen, generation to generation!"

"'Ere chuck it," said Heasen. "You're preachin' agyne. That ign't no use, Cledron—never is!"

"I am not preaching. But look you, Heasen, I did not say that I wass sorry for Kate's son; he iss not the poor man I mean at all."

The chief engineer entered the stokehole from between the boilers. Heasen disappeared into the bunker. Old Cledron threw open a furnace door and flung a shovel of coal on the glowing mass within.

For a while the chief watched him and the other fireman on the second engineer's watch at their work. Then he spoke.

"Cledron, wha is the puir man that ye mean, eh?"

Old Cledron was startled.

"I wass talking of the captain, sir. He has had much to suffer."

He peered into a furnace and shut the door with a clang.

"That iss life, sir; he made his son hate him, and now his son is dead, and he would give his soul, sir, to have word with him. Yess, I know. I know what he iss thinking. He iss a sad man, sir, and it iss too late! But why wass he so hard? That iss something that we do not know. And that iss why I am sorry for him!"

The chief grunted.

"Ye auld blether," he said.

He went out of the stokehole into the engine-room, determined to go on deck at once and give Ironfist Dickie's message. Old Cledron was right. Ironfist would give his soul to have word with his son!

He spoke to the second engineer and was on his way to the ladder when the clang-clang, clang of the telegraph ringing to "half-speed" made him stop. He answered the bridge signal, glanced at the clock on the bulkhead and entered the time on the blackboard.

The second engineer slowed down the engines.

"Wonder what that'll be for?" he said.

"Fog," said the chief. "Been gettin' thick syne tea time."

From the deck there came the blare of the whistle.

"An' noo we'll ha'e that noise keepin' us awake a' nicht, I suppose. A-weel, we mauna grumble. It's no' like the English Channel, onyway."

Later he climbed the long steel ladders to the engine-room gratings and emerged on deck through the alleyway into darkness and damp fog that obscured the outline of familiar objects and deadened sound, so that it was as difficult to hear as to see. For a minute or so he stood by the engine-room casing, peering into the murk and listening to the slow beat of the cranks in the engine-room and the whistle shrieking its message into the night.

Then he walked for'ard past the fiddley and the funnel and the bunker hatch. The second mate came out of the saloon alleyway and gazed seaward to port.

He saw the chief engineer approaching.

"Hullo, chief! Come on thick, hasn't it?"

"Listen," said the chief.

It seemed that his ears had caught the faint throb of engines in the distance.

"Is thon some ither feller or no'?"

He moved across to the starboard rails and listened.

The second mate followed him.

"You don't think you heard anything really, do you, chief?"

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"No," said the chief presently. "It's thon —— whustle makin' echoes, or ma ain imagination mebbe! I dinna ken."

"Moon's not up yet," said the second. "Wouldn't have thought it could have got so —— dark so quick."

"I mind yince when I was in the auld *Mwassa* rinnin' into jist sic' anither fog as this between sunset an' moon-rise aboot a hunerd mile sooth o' whaur we are the noo. We hadna——"

He broke off sharply, certain now that he could hear another steamer.

Above his head the whistle screeched.

"I've guid ears, Mr. Trieve. Listen! What's that?"

And then the second heard too.

"You're —— right, chief," he said. "There's someone quite near us."

All of a sudden he gave a yell.

"My ——, look! Look there!"

He pointed. On the starboard bow there was suddenly visible from where they stood amidships a red side-light, blurred and indistinct.

The second raced up the ladder. The chief heard the voice of Ironfist on the bridge shouting to the man at the wheel and saw the dark mass of another vessel looming up out of the fog right on top of the *Askelon's* for'ard well-deck. As he turned and ran for the engine-room there came a thunderous crash of steel plates being torn asunder. The deck rose under his feet and rocked drunkenly in the shock of the collision. He was flung head first against a ventilator.

His fall stunned him. It was some minutes before he had strength enough to raise himself to a sitting position.

Some one was speaking in an excited gabble to someone else: "Slammed slap into us, full speed, between Number 1 and Number 2 hatch. We can't float!"

"What's it matter? They're sendin' out an S. O. S. 'ard as they can. T'other feller will pick us up."

After that the chief's one thought was that he must get down to the engine-room, collision or no collision. That was his place, the engine-room!

He picked himself up, dazed and shaken, and limped toward the alleyway over a tilting deck. And then slowly, for his knee hurt him, he climbed down the long, endlessly long ladders into the depths, hearing as he descended the telegraph clanging a message. He reached the sloping platform to find the second engineer smoking a cigaret, as if nothing out of the ordinary were happening, and the third and fourth with him smiling uneasily, all three of them prepared to leave as soon as he gave the word.

"I've been ower lang," he said breathlessly. "I fell."

"The bridge has just rung off the engines, chief," said the second. "Everything's O. K. down here. You've cut your head, did you know?"

"Is a' richt wi' the stokehol'?" asked the chief.

He put his hand to his forehead and was surprised to find blood on his fingers.

"Twa fut o' watter there a'reidy," said the third. "An' the bulkheid's gi'in' wey, sir! I tellt the twa firemen an' the trimmer to get to —— oot o't sune's they cud."

"The greaser's gone, too," said the second. "Feet cold."

"Up ye gang," said the chief. "The bilin' o' ye! Sharrp's the word!"

He cast a last look round his beloved engine-room. A feeling of sadness crept over him as he saw that even now a dark flood of water had begun to flow swiftly in between the boilers from the lower level of the stokehole.

"Come on, chief," shouted the second from the middle platform. "What's keeping you?"

"I'm comin'," he said.

He climbed with difficulty. His knee was beginning to stiffen, and the ladders had tilted over so far that the whole weight of his body was on his arms as he clung to the hand-rails. If he slipped— But —— it, he wouldn't slip! He couldn't!

When he reached the port alleyway he hurried into his room, tugged open a drawer, put his wallet into his pocket, grabbed a photograph of his wife and children and slung his overcoat over his arm, for it would be cold in the life-boat. And then the water in the stokehole must have swamped the last of the fires, for all at once the lights went out and he groped his way out through the darkness to the deck.

THE ship was settling down by the head with a list to starboard, but he judged that it would be some time yet before she sank. He halted and struggled into his coat, leaning back against the

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engine-room casing. The roar of escaping steam made it impossible to hear anything distinctly, but above his head on the narrow platform, level with the engine-room skylights, the hands were getting the port life-boat swung out on the davits. He listened to their voices as he lit his pipe.

"—— it," some one was shouting—the mate probably, "use your muscle, you perishing lubbers! Heave, all together now! That's got it!"

From the other side came the voice of the bos'n at the starboard life-boat: "Swing 'er for'ard, you, an' back out 'er starn! That's the style! —— an' ——, some o' you —— Cardiff men was born tired!"

"You got that boat swung out, bos'n?" called the mate. "Where's Mr. Trieve?"

"Mr. Trieve," said the bos'n. "Where's Mr. Trieve?"

Voices shouted.

"Mr. Trieve!"

The chief engineer buttoned up his overcoat and moved cautiously along the port side of the sloping deck.

The second engineer appeared out of the darkness and caught hold of his arm.

"Come on, chief, I'll give you a hand up."

The wireless operator came scrambling past.

"No use being a dead hero, I'm for another ship!"

The second mate followed him.

"Mr. Rack," he shouted, "the captain says go ahead, lower away. He won't come!"

"What d'you mean, won't come?"

"Come on, chief," said the second engineer. "Hurry!"

"Bide a wee, Mr. Oatfield! Whaur's the auld man?"

"That you, chief," called the mate. "The boat's swung out. Make haste, for ——'s sake!"

"Whaur's the auld man, Mr. Rack?"

"Ow, do myke 'yste, some o' yer; we're dahn by the 'ead a mile," whimpered a voice. "Wot's it matter abaht the ol' man, blast 'im!"

"You'll get a slap on the jaw, young 'Iggins——"

"Leafe the lad be, Heasen! He iss afraid."

This was old Cledron.

The mate raised his voice.

"Captain Harron! Where are you?"

"Lower away those —— boats, Mr. Rack, as I told you," came the harsh answer. "What the —— are you playing at, risking men's lives!"

"Come on, chief!" said the second.

And then it flashed into the chief's mind that this was the chance that Ironfist had asked for. He was tired of having to live; why then should he leave his ship? And there was Dickie's message that he had not had!

"The —— auld foo'," he said.

With a sudden wrench he broke away from the second engineer and plunged for'ard down the sloping deck, clinging on hand over hand to the port rail, hearing as he ran the squeaking of the falls in the blocks as the boats were lowered.

He might be going to his own death; he was at least deliberately throwing away his hope of safety. He did not care. He had promised to deliver Dickie's message; he must keep his word. None the less his thoughts were bitter. He was saying good-by to his wife, his bairns, his home—everything that he had had to make life worth living—for the sake of Ironfist! —— him!

He slid toward the ladder that led to the lower bridge.

"Captain Harron, whaur the —— are ye?"

"Mac, what are you doing there?"

Ironfist's figure showed dim in the darkness on the flying bridge.

The chief staggered across the lower bridge and began to climb. In the distance, a long way off it seemed, he could hear the sound of oars and voices calling. Ironfist reached out, clutched his hand and hauled him up the last two steps of the ladder.

"You —— fool, chief, why aren't you in your boat?"

He let go of him, cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted:

"Mr. Rack—life-boat ahoy! Stand by to pick up the chief!"

"Mr. MacLeston!"

The second engineer's voice came from the darkness.

"Mr. MacLeston!"

"Come on, sir," shouted the mate. "Captain Harron, jump, for ——'s sake, or we'll be sucked under!"

"Jump!" yelled the men in the boat. "Jump!"

"I'm not going to leave the —— ship!" said Ironfist. "D'yer hear? Sheer off!"

The chief engineer, fighting now for his

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own life, panic-stricken at the approach of death, but as stubborn as the man facing him in the cold fog and darkness, clutched at his shoulder with one hand while he held to the rail of the bridge with the other.

"Captain Harron," he said, "when I saw Dickie twa days syne he tellt me he'd ne'er hatit ye, ye unnerstaun'? If ye were sorry he was deid, I was to tell ye that! Noo, d'ye unnerstaun'? He thocht ye hatit him, but he didna hate you! He ne'er had! Ne'er!"

"You're just saying that! Chief, for the love of God, go!"

Ironfist gripped the hand-rail at the head of the ladder.

"I'll stay where I am," he said. "Jump, while you've got a chance!"

The chief uttered a groan of despair.

"Guid God Almichty," he said. "What kin' of a game is this ye're playin'?"

The end had come. Ironfist had made up his mind to die! —— the man for a selfish swine! —— him!

The funnel seemed to be hanging over their heads; there was the sound of a muffled explosion in the stokehole, men were shouting. Somewhere, miles away, there came the forlorn hooting of a steamer's whistle.

In a sudden frenzy of despair, convinced that Ironfist was mad and that he would never relax his grip on the rail even in death, the chief sent his right fist crashing into his face. Ironfist grunted and fell sideways as the *Askelon's* stern stood up perpendicularly in the air like the side of a tall house, and the water swept over the bridge.

After it was all over, the chief had a hazy memory of clutching at Ironfist's collar and struggling fiercely against the suction that was dragging him down with the ship as she took her plunge, and then of being slowly suffocated until something broke somewhere and he lost consciousness. When he came to himself he was being hauled on board the port life-boat by the mate, the third engineer and a deckhand.

"Whaur's the auld man?" he asked as soon as he could speak.

"At the end of your fist," was the answer. And then the chief knew that he was still clinging to Ironfist's collar, that he had done his best, and that whether he were living or dead he could do no more. He knew that his knee was sore, that his head throbbed, and that he was very sleepy, so sleepy that he could only give a little sigh and let everything slide away from him once more into nothingness.

OF THE steamer that had run down and sunk the *Askelon* there was no sign. Either she too had sunk, which was unlikely, or she had lost all sight of the two life-boats in the fog. Three or four times during the night some of the men said that they heard a whistle hooting, but morning dawned fine and clear with not a ship in sight.

Ironfist was alive; but his right leg was broken and he seemed to be suffering a good deal of pain. He lay in the stern of the port life-boat on his back, with the chief's wet overcoat over him, his face gray and sunken like an old man's. At times he talked in a low voice very earnestly, apparently imagining in his delirium that he was speaking to his dead son. He wanted Dickie to understand, so he said, how much he had tried to help him, how great was the love he had for him, how proud of him he was, and how sorry he was for all that he had done to make him miserable. It was his own fault, his own fault!

The men in the boat listened in silent amazement and wondered why old Ironfist hadn't shown the boy a little more kindness when he was alive. Now he was dead, he was sorry. Where was the sense in it? They discussed the mystery among themselves.

Only the fat little chief engineer understood the true reason for the father's penitence and remorse.

As the day wore on Ironfist grew weaker.

The mate was worried.

"How do you think he is, chief?"

"He's mair weak nor I like to see," he said. "Thon leg o' his needs settin.'"

"He's wandering in his mind, too," said the mate. "It's funny him imagining he was fond of Dickie, isn't it?"

"I dinna ken sae muckle aboot that," said the chief. "I shudna wunner, Mr. Rack, if he were speakin' the truth."

But the mate did not believe him, he knew.

And presently the little chief began to wonder whether after all he had done what was right in saving Ironfist. Mightn't it have been better if he had let him go down with his ship? Perhaps theologically, by the rules of Christianity and ethics, it would

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have been sinful for Ironfist to have drowned himself through not wishing to live, and yet, even looking at things from the point of view of his own Presbyterian upbringing, the chief could not imagine anything very dreadful happening to Ironfist in the hereafter because he had found existence on earth intolerable.

But that of course was heresy.

Early in the afternoon the life-boats sighted the smoke of a steamer. Oars to which were attached shirts were hoisted as signals. The men talked to each other of their chances of being rescued. And gradually any anxiety they had faded.

The steamer was heading straight for the two boats.

"She sees us," said the mate. "No need to worry now."

"That'll be the *Idumea*," said the chief a little later.

"Mebbe it is," said the mate. "She was due to leave Genoa a couple of days after us."

"I'd ken that funnel o' hers an' her snub nose onywhaur. I ne'er thocht to tak' muckle pleasure in seein' the like o' her, but I'll be delightit to ha'e the feel o' her deck-plates under ma feet, I'm tellin' ye!"

Ironfist stirred uneasily.

"What's that, chief?"

"There's a ship in sight. The *Idumea*."

Ironfist closed his eyes again. The chief went on.

"I was ha'in' a bit argyment wi' the *Idumea's* chief an' the auld man last time I met them aboot the rate o' knots they cud get oot their auld engines. I'll ha'e a chance the noo to test ma professional judgment personally."

"She's faster than us," said the mate.

"Nae sic thing," said the chief.

The captain of the *Idumea*, an ugly, blunt-nosed Cardiff tramp, high out of the water, bound light for Alexandria, hailed the two boats as they rowed alongside.

"Well, where do you come from, eh?"

"The *Askelon!*"

"What's that? The *Askelon?*"

It seemed that the men lining the rails of the *Idumea* were excited and disturbed by what they heard.

"The *Askelon*," they repeated. "The *Askelon!*"

"Sunk in collision last night," shouted the mate. "All hands saved."

"We had your S. O. S., but couldn't get anything else. Where's Captain Harron?"

"He's broken his leg," said the chief.

"Is that you, Mr. MacLeston?"

"How are you, captain!"

The chief recognized the captain of the *Idumea* staring down at him.

"Hold me up," said Ironfist in a weak voice.

He struggled to raise himself and fell backward with a groan. The second engineer caught him.

"Captain Harron," shouted the captain of the *Idumea*. "Every —— ship in the Mediterranean's tryin' to call you up! Did you have a message about your son yesterday afternoon?"

The men of the *Askelon* had shipped their oars and made fast the ropes thrown to them. High above their boats towered the side of the *Idumea*; curious faces gazed down on them in dead silence, watching.

"A message?" said Ironfist. "Yes, he's dead."

"Well listen, you've got to prepare yourself for a shock. Take it easy, captain! The message was sent out just as it came down from the hospital in Italian, understand; but it got twisted all wrong into English."

"Well?" said Ironfist. "Well?"

"Your son's not dead at all! Last word we had this morning he was doing fine!"

IT WAS a warm evening. The sun had set, but the golden afterglow still lingered in the west.

On the *Idumea's* Number 4 hatch abaft the engine-room, the mate and the chief engineer of the *Askelon* sat and smoked their pipes and talked.

The chief had brought up the problem of Ironfist and the Scorpion.

"A man canna die as the Scorpion died wi'oot some yin talkin', an' that's a fac'! What are ye gaun to dae?"

"Ironfist couldn't have left more evidence knocking around if he'd tried," said the mate. "Suppose those two girls take it into their heads to talk."

"They winna," said the chief. "Lucy, if what they say is true, wud ha'e seen the Scorpion hang wi' pleasure. Besides, if ye min' hoo she tuk to her heels, she disna ken what fur Ironfist wantit to gang to his hoose. An' as fur Nina, she's as muckle to be trustit as ony o' the rest of us. But what o' the haun's, eh? An' what o' the

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Idunnea's haun's—fur if they dinna ken a'ready they wull sune. An' what o' Kate, eh? She'll be movin' heaven an' earth to fin' oot what's become o' her son."

"Well," said the mate, "mebbe there's a remedy. Here's the log o' the *Askelon*. I grabbed it out of my room after I'd got down from the bridge. Ironfist, of course, took none of the ship's papers. This is good evidence. See! We'll turn up and have a look at what's entered for the day before yesterday."

He skimmed over the pages and stopped.

"Here we are. Now, Mr. MacLeston, what about this?"

He read:

"Stowaway discovered—time, seven p.m., in after peak. Interviewed by captain and would give no name, but was recognized as a water-front character from Genoa, known as the Scorpion. Seemed dazed as if under the influence of drink or drugs. While his case was under discussion he was allowed on deck by himself. Later when a search was made for him he was missing. It is presumed that he either fell or jumped overboard."

The mate looked up.

"And that's all that concerns the Scorpion. Will it do?"

"Aye," said the chief. "It wull. An' it's neir enoo' to the truth, Mr. Rack, fur me to feel that I ha' ena gaun again' ma convictions vera seriously. Ma conscience is clear onyway."

He paused and considered.

"Aye, the Scorpion didna kill Dickie an' he's deid by mistak,' but I'm unco gled. I wunna ha'e thocht I cud say that, but I dae! The warl's better an' cleaner wi'oot him."

And so the voyage ended, as all voyages must, sooner or later. The hands of the *Askelon* returned home and carried from fo'csle to fo'csle the strange story of the Scorpion and Ironfist. There were many versions; but rumor had garbled fact to such an extent that the only version that was accepted as true was the brief statement that the mate had entered in the log.

The mate himself got a ship of his own, at last. The chief engineer went as chief of the *Hazeroth*, fresh from the builder's yard on the Clyde. Ironfist left the sea.

A year and a half after the loss of the *Askelon* Dickie Harron joined the *Hazeroth* as second mate, in Roath Basin, Cardiff.

He seemed much the same in appearance and manner as when he had been the *Askelon's* third; he was a little grave, perhaps, and more sure of himself, but otherwise he had not changed.

The chief asked after Ironfist.

The boy smiled.

"You wouldn't know him. You remember how he used to jump on me for the slightest excuse, don't you? Well, now, he's the very opposite. He doesn't say very much—he couldn't, of course—but he's doing his best to show we're friends. That's a bit of a step for him, chief, isn't it?"

"Aye," said the chief. "An' is he weel?"

"Health's all right, if that's what you mean, but he's like a man who's been through something that's aged him before his time. I think he's happy enough anyway. One thing about him that puzzles me, though, is if ever I try to talk about the *Askelon* and the crowd we were with, he'll either dry up altogether or start talking about something else. I wonder what made him different."

"I dinna ken," said the chief, "unless mebbe it was thon wireless message to say ye were deid that broke him."

For a time he gave himself over to thought.

"We tuk a cargo o' coal to Genoa last trip, did ye hear? The café was the same as it was when we were last there, but Kate had gaun. The police got efter her for somethin', an' she had to clear oot in a hurry or she'd ha'e been lockit up."

"You remember that girl, Nina?" said the boy. "Don't you? She wrote me a letter thanking me. A rum kid! Seems to think me a little tin god! Lord! As if any man wouldn't have tried to help a girl that had got herself mixed up with a gang like that!"

He puckered his forehead into the frown the chief remembered so well.

"Mr. MacLeston, you're the first of the old crowd I've seen since I went to hospital. Tell me this: What became of that man who tried to knife me—the Scorpion?"

"Didna ye hear?" said the chief. "He was droon'd."

"An accident?" asked the boy.

"Aye!" said the chief. "An eccident."

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The Third in a Quarrel

by WILLIAM BYRON MOWERY

Author of "A Man's Line," "The Seventh Man," etc.

"BAFFIN" Bill Pangman, working on a new bird bolas to conserve the cartridges for his Mannlicher-Schoenauer 6.50, watched a kaiak shoot out from the pink granite headland of the Cape of God's Mercie and dodge the slob ice, as it scooted across the rattle toward his little island. The kaiaker was waving the double paddle like a flail.

"Must be Nagak," Baffin muttered, after the manner of the trapper or bush-trader who lives eight months of the frozen year by himself. "He's t' only Kukarilaqmiut that knows I'm anywheres on t' coast this Summer."

It was a quarter-mile from the rocky, round island to the headland. At low tide, a long, narrow reef was awash from the main coast to the island; but at high tide the reef was submerged a few feet in the apple-green water—just deeply enough to be dangerous for unwary craft larger than an *umiak*. In fact, the storm-battered remains of a little ten-tonner were lying half-buried in the silt sand at the point where the reef joined the island. Along the rock ledge which skirted the island, Baffin had seen signs where the survivors of the wreck had lived for an indefinite time.

Nagak paddled his skin boat carefully across the reef, jumped into the water a hundred yards up the coast from Baffin, and set a colony of arctic terns clackering, by carrying his kaiak through their weaving rookery. He waved as he came close, and spoke—

"I am Nagak and a friend," he said, using the formula of greeting.

Baffin lifted his rifle from his knees and laid it on the ground, in answer.

"I am glad I have found you," Nagak panted in Innuit. "I was afraid you would be gone south, *kabluna*. I have come down the coast searching for you."

"I am still here," Baffin stalled, curious to know what had brought the Innuit from the interior to see him.

Nagak, hog-fat from good Summer living on "high" meat and fresh oil, began a long overture, protesting friendship with Baffin.

"Remember that I bring you the Winter furs of the Kukarilaqmiut," he finished, "and that once when you could not guide the white man's ship to seal ice, I told you of a great herd in a bay. We are almost-brothers, *kabluna?*"

"Yes, we are friends," Baffin interrupted, smelling a request. "What is troubling you, Nagak?"

"You do not know Powtak, the strong man?"

"Of the Kukarilaqmiut I know only you. Your people hide inland and travel with the caribou."

"This Powtak has demanded that I shall pull arms with him. He bellowed it in the

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Kozgee, when a dozen men could hear him," Nagak said with a grimace.

"Well, why don't you pull arms with him, then?" Baffin asked foolishly.

Nagak was square-built and sturdy, but sawed-off.

"With Powtak? He is as big as you and has muscles like a bear. There is no Kukarilaqmiut who has a chance with him."

"Well, what does he want you to pull arms about?" Baffin asked.

"Aninaq, who is to be my wife shortly."

"Powtak wants her?"

"Yes. His own wife is barren. But Aninaq—a dozen men would have *her*.

Baffin reflected a minute.

"If you're afraid to pull arms with Powtak, why doesn't her father or her brothers wrestle with him?"

"She has neither."

"An orphan?"

Nagak did not answer, but looked out over the apple-green water. Baffin saw quickly that the Innuit did not want to discuss Aninaq.

"And you want me to pull arms with this bear of a man, and save that woman for you, eh? Why should I bother myself and perhaps make Powtak angry enough to toss a harpoon when my back is turned."

"Because you are my friend," Nagak said simply. "I have always been yours."

Baffin ran his hand through his hair. The lonely weeks on the island had passed dreadfully slow, even for him. The physical contest with the Kukarilaqmiut strong man appealed to him. He reflected that probably there would be little personal risk, though in his days he had seen the amiable Innuit nature change in a twinkling to the cold ferocity of a polar. He did not much fear the enmity of the tribe, because he was about ready anyway to leave the Far North, pull out for St. John and buy a fishing-schooner, and settle down.

Baffin was thirty; he was losing his zest for roaming in far places. He was not a bush-loper by nature, but a wholesome man in whom the desire for a home and association with other men was growing more insistent with each year.

"I must say you've been white in your dealings with me, the young parent-eater," Baffin said in the burr of the Labrador. Then in Innuit: "I will wrestle with Powtak for you if you will help me first on a job."

Nagak nodded with alacrity.

Baffin pointed to a partially built stone wall across the neck where the reef joined the island.

"If you will help me build that wall two feet higher than I can reach, I will leave this place. Otherwise, not."

Nagak looked at the structure curiously, and at the signs indicating Baffin had been upon the island for many weeks.

"Why is the *kabluna* building such a wall on this island?" he queried.

"*Illilegahs* ask questions," Baffin rejoined tartly. "When *men* can't see with their eyes, they do not know. Let us get to work."

II

TWO days and a night later, Baffin and the Innuit came to the inland Kukarilaqmiut camp beside a big mud lake. The banks and the shallow water swarmed with helpless, moulting gray wavies, old-squaws and brandt. The Kukarilaqmiut were killing them by the thousands, and drying them black in the hot, almost continuous sun.

The camp was electrified when the visitor came over the swell. Nagak waved his arms and ran on ahead to reassure them. Some of the men had seen a *kabluna* before, and stood off at a distance, affecting nonchalance. But a flock of little folk, wearing nothing besides a curious, half-frightened expression, crowded close to Baffin, shrinking back whenever he looked straight at them. The women peeped out of the leather teepees, or quit their work of turning

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the geese on the caribou-hide thongs. Several men stepped up and offered greeting.

"Where is this Powtak, bear of a man?" Baffin inquired of Nagak. "Let us get the wrestling over with as soon as possible."

Nagak pointed to a hulking big, middle-aged Innuit standing aloof. "There is Powtak, who challenged me. But you must rest first, *kabluna*. We have come a long ways since we slept last."

"You don't want to take no chances on losin' that girl of yours!" Baffin drawled in English. "Where is Aninaq? I would like to see if she is worth pulling a strong man's arm off."

"She is in a teepee," Nagak answered briefly, making no move to take Baffin to her.

"T' beggar thinks I'll take her under my wing after I've won her, an' walk off with her!" Baffin laughed to himself.

He walked about, looking the Kukarilaqmiut over. There were eighteen men, twenty-odd grown women and several marriageable girls, and about fifty children. The men were wearing trousers of caribou skin and moccasins of plaited heather willow. In addition to the trousers, the women wore a loose-fitting tunic that fell from the shoulders and was gathered about the waist with a fox fur belt. None of the women were much to look at. They were broad-faced, bottle-nosed, squint-eyed, and much too fat and greasy. They were an amiable lot, however, and pressed Baffin with delicacies from the stone pots, kept continually seething. With Powtak's hulking figure in sight, Baffin ate moderately.

Besides a half-dozen leather teepees into which he politely did not peep, there were three large caribou-skin tents: the Kozgee of the unmarried men and older boys, where they slept with their feet toward the center poles like spokes in a wheel; a similar house for the girls and young women; and the *shaman's* lodge where the old soothsayer beat upon his *sowyunga* and held conference with his spirit friends on all important matters.

Behind one of the teepees, Baffin saw a young woman crouching. She had drawn a skin robe over her head, and sat silent and motionless except when a violent sob shook her.

"That is Ataita, Powtak's wife," Nagak explained in answer to Baffin's questioning look. "When he put her out because she was barren, she disturbed him by crying behind his lodge. He threw an ax at her and broke her foot."

"T' —— brute!" Baffin rasped. "I'll break his neck for that!"

Baffin's curiosity about Aninaq went unappeased. He felt he had a right to see the girl he was wrestling for; but Nagak kept close to him whenever he approached the teepees. It made Baffin grin to think Nagak feared he would march off with the girl after he had won her—if he won.

He slept a few hours in a teepee, then took a dip in the lake, and told Nagak he was ready to wrestle Powtak.

In his trading with the Innuits of the Straits, Baffin had practised arm-pulling, and knew a few of the fancy tricks. He was nerved by the knowledge that the Kukarilaqmiut would laugh scornfully at him and that he would lose all his prestige if Powtak won. Powtak was big and burly, but Baffin *knew* the superiority of a white man's muscle and better co-ordination of nerve and sinew.

The whole camp crowded about the spot. A long round rock resembling a log had been staked securely. Powtak sat down on the ground, knees in the air and feet braced against the rock. Baffin took off his shirt and sat down opposite him, flexing his muscles and digging his boot-heels into the ground.

At a signal from an old man, each leaned forward and clutched the other's arms below the elbows. The old man saw that their arms were exactly over the center of the stone, and gave a second clucking signal. Baffin and the Innuit pulled arms!

Baffin hardened his body very gradually, for the back muscles must be eased into their maximum strength. He allowed Powtak to pull him forward a foot before he braced himself and stopped it. They strained for several minutes, with neither gaining an inch.

One trick which Baffin had picked up was the thumb gouge, which numbs the nerve of the forearm. He had not meant to use it, till he discovered that Powtak had smeared his forearms with the vanishing brain oil of the walrus. When he felt his hold slipping and guessed the reason, he crooked his thumbs imperceptibly and matched Powtak's trick.

As his thumbs sank into the cordage of

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muscles, he could feel the lessening grip of Powtak's fingers. His thumbs dug deeper and he began to pull the Innuit's shoulders forward. Great drops of sweat poured from Powtak's forehead and streaked down his ochred face. He glared savagely into Baffin's eyes, not three feet from his own; but the trader pulled him irresistibly forward, inch by inch.

Suddenly Baffin's legs, which had been bowed up, straightened out flat on the ground. Powtak catapulted over the rock as if propelled from behind. The Kukarilaqmiut roared. Baffin leaped to his feet. Powtak had jumped up and grabbed a *kiliutok* from a more or less sympathetic bystander. With a bellow, he sprang at Baffin.

In good faith, Baffin had put knife and belt-gun aside. He was weaponless, and not one of the Kukarilaqmiut, not even Nagak, made a move to intercede or to toss him a weapon. He had not time even to stoop and pick up a *darnick*, before the Innuit was upon him. He threw up his left arm to ward off the thrust at his neck.

The *kiliutok* struck his forearm half-way between the elbow and the wrist, and pierced it till the point came through the skin on the other side of Baffin's arm. He could feel the hot, stabbing pain of the steel between the bones of his forearm. Powtak snarled in triumph and tried to jerk the *kiliutok* back out for a finishing thrust. Quicker than thought itself, Baffin jabbed his left arm against the *kiliutok* till the knife ran through his arm clear to the hilt. The bones of his forearm were a leverage.

With a twist that wrenched a cry of pain from his own lips, Baffin tore the *kiliutok* out of the Innuit's hand. With his right hand he swung once and swung hard. It was a clean, hard upper-cut, cracking like the smack of a board on canvas. Powtak, stupified at Baffin's courageous trick, got the blow under his chin. His head snapped back between his shoulders, his legs doubled up, and he measured his six-feet-one on the silt ground.

Baffin knelt and gingerly drew the *kiliutok* out. Not much blood followed, for the knife had pierced a cordage of muscle and missed the blood vessels. His arm tingled and felt numb, but infection in that latitude was not likely. He buckled on his belt-gun and knife to be ready for anything, when Powtak should come around again.

The Kukarilaqmiut were scowling and seemed only to want a leader. Several of the young bucks were fingering their spears. Baffin had seen such a veering of the wind before. He knew what it meant.

Motioning to Nagak, he walked backward toward the teepee where his Mannlicher-Schoenauer was. Nagak came.

"You try to keep that pack out of spearing distance till I get a start," he ordered crisply. "I've got to get away *now*, or Powtak will have them throwing harpoons through this teepee."

"No, no! Do not run *now!*" Nagak urged. "The Kukarilaqmiut never kill a visitor in their camp. But when you set foot over that swell, they will be on you. Wait. In an hour it will be dark. Then I shall show you how to escape."

Reluctantly Baffin acquiesced. He knew there were a dozen Innuits within a spear's toss of the teepee. They would bring him down before he could fire three shots or run ten feet. Nagak went back out. As twilight gathered, Baffin could hear him arguing angrily with the men. He had told the truth in one thing. They did not molest the teepee. Baffin felt he was safe so long as he did not try to escape.

A sleety squall whipped out of the northeast when the sun went down. Baffin felt thankful for the blanket of scudding clouds which made the short night darker than the run of late August nights.

Momentarily expecting Nagak to return, Baffin was startled to hear a tap on the back of the teepee, and a low voice saying:

"I am Aninaq, and a friend. I am coming in."

"Come," Baffin answered, guarding his voice.

A slender, girlish figure crept under the folds of the tent and stood by the seal oil lamp. If Baffin was surprised at her voice, he was doubly surprised at seeing the girl whom he had kept from Powtak.

She was medium-tall, slender, and lithe. Her face was oval but not fat. Beneath the ochre and specular iron, he could make out a healthy brown complexion. Her hair was black and greased plentifully. Not being a skin-chewing wife yet, she had even, fine white teeth. She was dressed in soft doe-skin pantaloons, a tunic of Summer caribou, a vest of bright mallard skins; and

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had a virgin's fillet holding back her hair.

"B' ——!" Baffin murmured. "If I get out of this alive, I'll say it *was* worth while to save *her* from that bear!"

"From my teepee I saw you pull arms with Powtak and saw you strike him to the ground," she said, still in a voice scarcely above a whisper. "I am glad. He cannot have me now."

"You are Aninaq, Nagak's promised?" Baffin asked, for no reason at all.

She nodded, her eyes on the bandage around his arm.

"Why, then, did you not come out, where I could see you and take heart?" Baffin asked gallantly.

"Nagak ordered me to stay within the teepee while you were in camp," she said. "He threatened me if I should show but the tip of my nose to you."

Baffin looked at her nose—a rather delicious snub—and laughed softly.

"T' gut-eater's got more sense than I thought he had!" he chuckled to himself.

Aninaq's brow wrinkled.

"What was it that the *kabluna* said?"

"Child-talk," Baffin replied. "Does Nagak know you are here now?"

Aninaq made a gesture of fear that answered more emphatically than words.

"I ought to break his neck, too!" Baffin said in English, staring hard at the girl. "He'll break her down in four or five years an' kick her out like Powtak done his woman, or trade her to an old man for some *komatik* pups."

Aninaq followed his words with wrinkled brow. When he stopped, she leaned forward and touched his bare throat.

"Ne—ck," she said, hesitantly.

Baffin started.

"Goodness, you pick up some English! Speak English?"

She repeated the words after him, parrot fashion, showing that she did not know what they meant.

Baffin pointed to his bewhiskered mouth.

"Mouth," he said, and repeated the word. "Ear."

She startled him again by touching her snub and saying nose—

"Nose."

Baffin ran his hands through his hair and tried to catch hold of an idea in his brain. He was silent for several seconds before he got a firm grasp of the idea.

He leaned forward and laid his hand on her arm.

"Baby" he said.

Her face lighted up.

"Baby," she repeated in crooning English. "Mammy—daddy."

Baffin was quivering all over his six-feet-two. His grip on her arm unconsciously tightened, as she said still other words. He thought of something more ambitious.

" 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star—' " he began slowly, having to dig deeply into his own memory.

Her face brightened more than ever; her eyes sparkled. She repeated the line, began the next, stumbled through it with a correcting word now and then from Baffin, and repeated the last two lines without help, running the words together and showing complete ignorance of what they meant.

Baffin pulled another nursery rhyme out of his slender store.

" 'Mary had a little'—" he began.

"Mary had a little caribou—" Aninaq went on gleefully.

In spite of the choking in his throat, Baffin set her right with "little lamb"; and she repeated the verse, preserving even the lisp of childhood:

> "Mary had a wittle wamb
> Ith fleethe wath white ath thnow
> And everywhere that Mary went
> Ve wamb wath thure to go."

Before she had finished, Baffin was pulling his long hair, fighting against too hasty conviction.

"Have you ever been twelve days swift travel down *there?*" he questioned tensely, pointing south toward the Straits. "Where the praying men have big books with pictures in them?"

She shook her head.

"I have never seen a *kabluna* before you. Only the men go to the coast."

Baffin's brain whirled. It might all be a mistake, inexplicable. He could not believe it. He probed for further proof. He was not sure.

"Do you know the story of Little Red Riding Hood?" he asked, starting it clumsily and going a little farther than the "Once upon a time."

In Innuit she told him the story eagerly, slipping in an English nursery word at times where the Innuit had no equivalent. Nor did she stop with that. She poured

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into Baffin's ears the story of the Three Pigs that Went to Market, Jack the Giant-Killer, and Cinderella; and finished with the story of the two boys who quarreled over the nut, called in the third boy to settle the quarrel; and the third boy took the goody. The nursery tales came to her like a flood.

Baffin, swearing strange Labrador oaths softly, chuckled strangely when she finished the story of the third boy taking the goody. He interrupted her.

"You," he asseverated, "you are a *kabluna*, as I am! When you first stood by the flame, I saw you were different from these others. You do not belong here. Your people live far down in the sunland."

She caught her breath sharply, unable to speak.

Baffin's mind was running on the wreck at the reef.

"The stories you told me are the stories that *kabluna* white mothers put their children to sleep with. This Kukarilaqmiut maybe killed your white father and mother, and took you away. You have forgotten the life when you were an *Illilegah*. You are a *kabluna*, and not one of these greasy gut-eaters. You do not want to stay with them, and go to Nagak's teepee?"

She covered her face and sank down against the tent wall.

"Oh, *kabluna*, if you are lying!"

"Do you?" he asked again. Then in English: "Nagak's t' whitest of t' lot, but, —— you can't ——"

She shook her head at his name.

"Will you go away with me—not to my teepee—but back to your own people? Can't you remember how much better that life was. Will you go back?"

He realized it was too momentous a question, coming on the heels of her great discovery. She did not answer, but Baffin knew what she would do if only she had a minute to think. Plain as midday, the girl realized she was not a Kukarilaqmiut. He saw she had promised Nagak in order to escape the brute of a Powtak.

His quick mind was framing schemes to escape and rejecting them as impossible, when Nagak, true to his promise, crawled into the tent. He was opening his lips to speak, as his eyes fell upon Aninaq. A rage seized him. He strode over to her and raised his foot.

"Stop!" Baffin rasped. "I will pull your head off your shoulders if you touch her."

"She is mine!" Nagak grunted. "What is she doing away from the teepee where I put her?"

"She is mine!" Baffin whipped back. "I won her from Powtak and besides, she is a *kabluna*. *That* is why you would not let me see her. She is not a wife for you. She would put poison in your seal oil, or bewitch your spear when old white Nauook was chasing you."

Baffin's arguments had little effect. He could have smashed the Innuit for the way he was looking at the girl—the mingled lust and rage in his piggish eye.

"You can not take her away. You can not get away yourself, *kabluna*, the dogs are hungry," Nagak taunted. They are watching, Powtak and the others. I know."

Baffin gave no sign of fright, though the Innuit's words and veiled threat chilled him.

"That may be true, but you promised to show me how to escape."

Nagak grimaced.

"If you left her here."

"She goes with me!" Baffin repeated without a quaver. "What do you want with her when she is not of your people?"

"She has good teeth; she will bear children; she is strong and quick."

"So are the girls of the Kukarilaqmiut, and they are of your kind and will keep your harpoons better than she. She has no brothers to help you when you go *kaiaking*. She has nothing. And I—I shall give you enough to keep three wives!"

Baffin caught the look that flitted across Nagak's face, interpreted it shrewdly, and went on—

"I shall give you enough to buy three arm-sticks like mine, that shoot as many times as you have fingers; and three *komatiks* with dogs buckled to them, and more spears than you can stack in the Kozgee."

"How! What?"

Baffin waited an impressive minute.

"I know where there are two black foxes. I caught them this Summer and I am keeping them till their furs get long and thick again. Two black foxes, Nagak! You know what that patch fox brought which you sold to me. They are each worth twenty times that."

"Where?"

"Will you trade her for the foxes?"

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Nagak nodded reluctantly, taking his eyes off Aninaq.

"Where?"

"They went across to an island to get a taste of goose. I saw them and kept them there. Do you remember that wall we built, Nagak?"

The Innuit started.

"Ho!" he ejaculated.

"You can take them to the Straits after the first Fall blizzard and become the wealthiest of the Kukarilaqmiut, Nagak," Baffin continued, to clinch the bargain.

"How do I know there are two black foxes on that island, *kabluna?*"

"Did I ever tell you a lie?" Baffin blazed. "Did I not keep you from selling your furs to that man who would never pay you? Did you not say, when you wanted a favor of me, that we are almost-brothers? The foxes are there and they are yours!"

Nagak agreed with an alacrity that surprized even Baffin. Not even Powtak could keep three wives!

The Innuit crept out to reconnoitre in the dark. Aninaq, who had listened fearfully, rose.

"I thought they were dreams, blood-brother," she whispered. "I remember that life, when I was an *Illilegah*. I lived in a great house that was always warm, and in another house that moved and had white wings. I thought they were dreams."

"If we get away alive, you will see," Baffin whispered hoarsely.

Nagak crept back in under the skirts of the tent. Instead of making directly for the pink granite swells, he led them down to the lake. They waded into the dark water, and with no more noise than a wallowing *namaycush* would have made, they skirted the lake and came out half a mile from the camp. Nagak kept with them for an hour. He stopped on top of a swell.

"A river empties into the bay where I showed you the seal ice, *kabluna*," the Innuit said. "At its mouth in a willow thicket you will find a small *umiak*. With that you can take your woman down the coast to the Straits. I shall go back and tell Powtak that you are tramping wearily northward."

Baffin felt a tingle of shame for having suspected Nagak during the last two hours. The Innuit could have signaled his people, regained Aninaq, and had the foxes too. He had only a few strong points; honesty was one of them.

III

THEY were almost to the coast by the second evening, Aninaq keeping the relentless pace almost as well as he. Within an hour's walk of the sea, they stopped for a meal of fish, which Baffin jerked out of the river with handline and berry bait. He went up to a swell overlooking their back-trail. He could see for miles over the niggerhead. Nagak must have shunted Powtak off in the opposite direction and covered up the trail completely. Baffin went back to Aninaq.

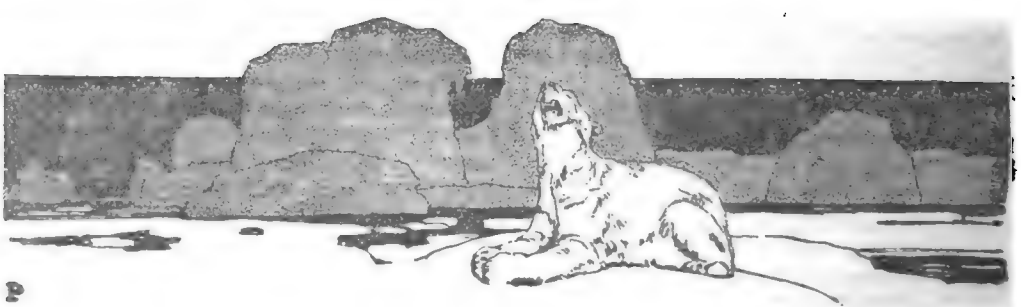
"Do you remember," he asked with a chuckle, during the meal, "what the third boy did with the goody after he took it from the two boys that quarreled?"

Aninaq looked steadily at her fish. A faint flush flew into her cheeks.

"No, I do not remember," she answered. "What did he do with it?"

Baffin had a suspicion that she *did* remember, but did not choose to say.

"He kept it!" Baffin said succinctly.



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The Holy Tiger

by JOHN EYTON

SOMETIMES men returning at dusk by the hill path to Kaladunghi would come in with trembling bodies and starting eyes and babble of a white tiger, bigger than a buffalo, crossing the shingle that makes a bed to the Koshi River. Strangers would wonder, but wise men would nod their heads and say—

"Ah, the Ancient One." Or—

"Ah, the Holy One of the Gorge."

Then they would tell tales.

He was white, they would say, as the snow on Nanda Devi, and older than mankind. The most ancient man in the Terai—old Moti Singh, who had begotten sons before the Mutiny and had lived a hundred years—gave precedence to the Holy One, who was old even when he was born. No bullet could pierce the Holy One—whispers here—because he had no body to pierce, or because, as others held, his spirit could leave his body at will and repair to the temple in the forest on the slope of the gorge, known to all men as the Holy Tiger's temple. *Sahibs* had come and gone—the commissioner, and the Lat Sahib, and Ramsay Sahib, and even he that had been before Ramsay Sahib.

They had tied up twenty buffalo calves on a night for him to kill, and on a night he had killed them all. They had ringed him with a hundred elephants and two hundred men perched in trees, and he had slipped through the net. They had thrown balls of fire at him as he had lain in a cane-brake and the fire had not even singed his coat. But on that day an elephant had been swallowed up in the mud, howdah and all. A full-grown elephant had been sucked in, and the mud had closed over his head as it would close over a stone—did not Abdullah Khan, the mahout, live to tell the tale?

But he was good for the men of Kaladunghi, the wise men would say; for, though he passed nightly by and nightly returned, he never killed within the confines of the village—only in the forest above or in the forest below. Wo to any man who interfered with his killing there. Evil would come on that man.

So, over the long black pipe and the wood fire, the beards of the wise men would wag. And if on the morrow the stranger wished to verify the tale, he had only to walk up the river bed to the place where the gorge overhangs it steeply and where blue rocks jostle the trees, and to see for himself. Great pug-marks he would see, splayed out broader than his hand and sunk deep in the wet sand by a clear pool.

"There he drinks" he would murmur, and, glancing quickly round—for it is a silent place—he would go on his knees and bend his head till it touched the sand, doing *pooja** to the drinker. Then he would take the hillside path and pass among the trees

*Worship.

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to a squat temple with a shaven priest in faded yellow brooding outside. There he would lay a few flowers ere he journeyed on.

No matter when he should chance to return by that way—six months, a year, ten years—he would hear the same tale. The Holy One still walked.

II

UNLIKE most legends, that of the Holy One was partly true. For close on a hundred years there had been a great tiger of the gorge—but not the same tiger, for three generations had haunted the place. The first, the grandsire, might have seen the flames of the Mutiny in his middle age. The second the sire, might have seen them when he was but a stripling *pattr** ambling behind his dam. But the third could not, with all deference to the ancient Moti Singh, have seen them at all.

But he had seen change. He had seen the redcoats marching up the old road to the hot barracks by the side of Kurpa Tal, the little dead lake. He had seen some of them dead of fever, and the barracks crumbling into empty shells and rubble-heaps, for black snakes to dwell in. He had seen the farms and the fields of the terai making ever greater rifts of young green in the yellow grass and the brown bushes of the jungle. For he was old. He was as old as a tiger might be.

His grandsire had died in a drought, lying helpless, beside the very deer he had come to kill, on the cracked mud of the last pool—and the vultures had picked him clean.

His sire had died in a thick tangle of grass by the little stream called Bulbul, and his body and bones, found by none, had melted into the soil.

Thus there had been no dead body to prove the passing of one and the coming of another, and the legend had held.

They called him white, but he was not quite white. His coat was the color of silver sand, faintly penciled with black. He lacked altogether the royal gold and the ebony, and at dusk or by moonlight or in the half-light before dawn he looked utterly white. He was seldom seen in the full light of day, for by day he slept in a thorny cleft of the hillside, not far, it was thought, from the temple. When the sun was about to set, and the hill lay in shadow, he would take his downward path, passing in full view of the temple, and by dusk would come to the river.

There, in a clear pool under a blue rock, he would drink, and, having drunk, would ford the shallows below and creep into the strip of jungle which skirts the village and joins the upper and the lower forests. Thence he would take one of the many forest rides and walk far into the terai to Gularbhoj, to Burhaini, to Dalpura—twenty miles at least, going and coming. On the way he would kill and eat, but he never came back on the second night to what he had killed—which fact concerns the legend.

Once, in that strip of jungle, he had killed a *khattra** and had been disturbed by woodcutters ere he had eaten. The next night he had returned by moonlight to eat, but he had hardly touched the calf when the sun had seemed to burst on the night, with thunder from above and a strange smell, and something had burned a furrow in his shoulder. Therefore he had never since returned to a kill, although on one night he had indeed killed twenty buffalo calves. Therefore, too, he had never since killed in that strip. So the men of Kaladunghi held that he was good for them.

As if to brand the memory of the day, he had ever since carried across his right shoulder a long bare furrow. But the skin had not been broken, so the saying that no bullet had pierced him was true.

He had a great head set close on the shoulders; yellow teeth in a slobbering jowl; smoldering yellow eyes; and worn, splayed pads. He was long and lean, and he walked slowly, lumbering with his head low. If men heard the song of a tiger in the gorge they knew that it was not he, for he was always silent.

Though his teeth were splintered and his muscles stiff, and though man was easy game, he had never killed man. Even as his sire and his grandsire had seen men dead by the road and had passed on—so nightly he was aware of man—brooding outside the temple, washing in the river, sleeping in the grass, riding on the road—and ignored him. Nightly too he heard the cries of the children of man and saw little brown bodies flitting in the firelight, but the sight and the smell and the sound of them never gave him pause or stirred him to kill. Perhaps

*Grown cub.

*Buffalo calf.

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the faith in his holiness was due to some dim knowledge of this abstinence.

So the years passed, and he still walked. If in one sense he was sacred to the villagers, in another he was sacred to the hunters, for to them he came to represent the supreme prize. According to their purses they hunted him, and according to their natures they dreamed of him—some, in feet and inches, as a record to be inscribed in a book and stretched on a wall; some, in flesh and blood, as a noble thing to kill; some, in craft, as a match for craft.

But, whoever dreamed and came and spent, the wise men only shook their heads.

"He will never die," they said.

III

JOHN TARBUTT swore he would have him. He took the shooting block for a month, brought six elephants, pitched a tent in a clearing on the river bank and swore that it should be a duel to the death—which meant something, for he had much on his side. He had money and leisure and, above all, woodcraft; he had the trick of silence; and he had shot tigers everywhere from the Nilgiris to Nepal. Indeed he lived for nothing else, and he did not mind how he hunted—afoot, on an elephant, on a tree, under a rock—so long as he got on terms with the one animal he deemed worth hunting. He was a silent man, and he hunted alone. A duel without spectators, craft against craft, filled the want of his nature.

So he sat down outside the tent and looked at the country, pipe in mouth. From where he sat he could trace the river, a ribbon of blue set in silver shingle, to the gorge, where its bed was confined between precipitous banks. A feathery wood clothed the gorge and spread along the hills till it melted in blue distance. Among the trees, a dot of white, was the little temple. When his eye lighted on it, he smiled to himself, for he was aware of the legend. Springing from the gorge, passing him, melting into the great forest behind him, was the strip of jungle—a mile wide—where they said the tiger walked. Indeed, there was nowhere else for him to walk if he desired to leave the hills. John Harbutt looked it up and down.

"Seems almost too easy," he said to himself.

For a week he seemed to do nothing. He fished. He passed the time of day with the priest at the temple, who informed him politely that, if he had come for the Holy One, he was wasting his time. He mooched about the strip of jungle with his pipe in his mouth, till the villagers, who had been agog with interest at his arrival, ceased to pay any attention to him. He was a sleepy *sahib*, they said, who forgot even to take a rifle with him.

But by that time he knew every track in the country. He knew that there were six tracks leading through the strip, and that the tiger used them all impartially. He knew that he did not kill there, for he had quietly sowed the place with buffalo calves. He also knew that he did not lie up there, for he had beaten out all the likely patches with his elephants. In fact, he ruled out the strip, and began to follow him—afoot, or on a pad elephant—in the deep jungle below.

"If only I could see him!" became his constant thought—for that was just what he failed to do.

There was no great difficulty about following him. There were the splayed *punjas** on the dusty tracks, and, when the *punjas* failed, bent grasses and turned leaves—once, even quivering grasses and leaves. There were all the warning sounds—deer and monkeys and peafowl and jungle fowl signaling to their kind. But get a view he could not. He heard him moving. He heard him drinking. He heard him killing. But he was always a moment too late.

After a fortnight it began to get on his nerves. He began to dream of a white tiger always just ahead of him at dusk on a long track between trees. The chance would come. He would align his sights, and—the road would be empty.

He was not superstitious. He had encountered tiger tales by the dozen—tigers with an alleged human spirit inside them, tigers that changed into magicians, tigers that turned away bullets, ghost tigers, impalpable tigers—but he had again and again given the lie to the tales by bringing in dead tigers. Knowing that almost all old tigers achieve a halo of romance, he pooh-poohed the legend of this one, based as it was, he thought, on stupendous luck, unusual cunning, and the accident of a temple. Yet he had to admit his antagonist elusive and to

*Footprints.

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reflect sadly that he was not even in a position to say definitely that he was not white. And he left the vicinity of the temple to the last. Superstitious or no, he had no great hopes of the temple.

He had many vigils, eating and sleeping under the trees as often as not. He haunted the forest paths. But invariably, though nothing but second sight or colossal luck could have accounted for the choice, he would find the prints on the wrong road. Sometimes he would look himself up and down, as if to ask himself what there was about him to betray him. But from his khaki helmet to his rope-soled shoes, he was of the color of the undergrowth. He had the movement and intuition of an animal. There was no explaining it.

After three weeks he sent his elephants away, and concentrated on the temple slope.

The temple stood on the side of a little depression, where a path ran and the trees stopped short. In the rainy season water collected there, but the place was dry now. The caked mud below the path, as well as the dust on the path, held a vivid record. There were innumerable splayed tiger prints, coming and going, and they all led to impenetrable thorn. There was no hope of following the tiger to his lair, even if it could be known that he had any settled lair. So Tarbutt tied up a buffalo calf in the hollow below the temple, and, for the first time, scored.

The calf was killed, but not eaten. Nor did the tiger return to eat it on the second night, though Tarbutt held aloof and let the calf lie.

"You know something" was his tribute to his quarry.

A second calf shared the fate of the first, with the same result.

"Tie up a hundred, and a hundred will perish," said the priest.

"So much the better," said Tarbutt, and tied up a third.

This time he climbed into a tree which commanded the hollow and prepared to spend the night there.

The moon was at the full, and by nine o'clock it made day of the ground, silvering the white path and the humped temple. Tarbutt, with an empty pipe in his mouth and his rifle across his knees, watched the calf as it browsed in the short grass—its outline clear as in daylight. The only sounds were the rustling of dew-drops from the trees, the nightjar's call, and the occasional "barks" of a suspicious deer.

Slowly the moon rose to its height. For an hour, maybe, it seemed to stand still in the heavens; then, began to sink. But as it sank, the black shadow of a clump of pines stole over the calf till the animal was blotted out in a creeping river of black, all the more intense for the light that lay round it. There was a complete inky way, whereby the tiger could come, and kill, and go.

"Anyway he can't know *that*!" thought Tarbutt.

But he had hardly formulated the thought before he was aware of something. He was an expert in sounds. Some obscure instinct in him could be relied on to distinguish between a significant sound and a sound that meant nothing—even to the rustle of a straw or the crackle of a leaf.

He had caught a sound.

It was something slighter than either a rustle or a crackle—the slightest conceivable sound, in fact—a stirring no greater than that which a mouse or an insect would make. But it was significant. At the time, in the place, it meant everything. He knew, as certainly as if he could see it, that in that patch—which looked much as if a large inkpot had been upset on the ground—a tiger was standing; and that tiger could be only one tiger.

In his mind's eye he could trace his actions—the eying of the calf, the planted forefeet, the listening poise, the tail tip just flicking. He would have bet a hundred rupees to an anna on it. He waited, tense.

The calf was seemingly lacking in instinct, for it was still browsing and blowing on the leaves.

Then—in an instant—all was over. A scurry; an impact; a little crack; a loud fall; silence. Utter silence!

Tarbutt sat like one carved in stone, his eyes straining to see some sign of movement within the dark patch—or, better still, outside.

A minute passed—five minutes—ten. Still not a sound.

The shadow was beginning to shift. Soon the head of the calf was visible in a silvered place. It was oddly pulled out—neck broken.

Gradually the body, crumpled and hunched and still, came into view—till Tarbutt was looking down on a black corpse.

Then, beyond the temple, where the path

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wound among the trees, he saw the movement of something white.

The tiger had come by the shadow, and killed in the shadow, and gone by the shadow. Then he had taken the open path.

"One up to you!" said Tarbutt.

IV

BY THE last night Tarbutt was almost in despair, but he decided on an all-night chase. To relax his mind, he would fish, leaving his rifle with a servant at an appointed place on the bank; then, at the first warning call of bird or beast, he would take up the trail.

So in the afternoon he took a light rod and fished up towards the gorge. The water was in good order—clear, but with a mild ripple—and he caught half a dozen clean, lively *mahsir* before he turned. He had fished by then right up to the jaws of the gorge, but the sun was still high and no shadow had touched the hillside. He knew that he had plenty of time.

It was a hot day—the first day, in fact, of the hot weather—and he walked slowly. The water was dazzling. The stones radiated heat. The hills shimmered, and the jungle seemed to drowse. So, when he came to a shady place—a strip of clean sand at the edge of a pool, with a blue rock to lean his back against—he sat down for a pipe. A quarter of a mile below him he could see his man waiting under a tree at a bend of the river. Feeling that he had half an hour at least to spare, and that he was in easy reach of his rifle, he sat idly, puffing at his pipe and examining the familiar *punjas* at his feet. For he was clearly sitting by the tiger's favorite drinking pool. There were caved-in prints a month old, as well as the clear impressions of yesterday. The sand was full of history.

"A very good choice, old friend," said Tarbutt, scraping the prints over with his foot, "a very good spot indeed."

Then suddenly his pipe dropped out of his mouth and clattered on the pebbles. He sat bolt upright, every muscle of him tense.

The great tiger was within a yard of him.

IN THE life of every animal, and man too for matter of that, there comes, the wise men say, an hour called *Kaza*—the hour of fate. It is the hour when he is off his guard and for once departs from his protective routine. It is the hour when God wills that he should die, and until that hour he will not die, whatever the odds against him. Thus would the wise men have explained the fact that on this day and this day only the Holy Tiger left the hillside before the shadow covered it and came down to drink an hour before his time.

John Tarbutt, on the other hand, put it down to the first hot-weather thirst. But, whatever may have been the explanation, the fact remains that he looked up from the prints into the eyes of the tiger.

Across a tiny basin of still water where minnows wheeled glinting was the head of the biggest tiger he had ever seen. It was almost white, faintly penciled with gray lines. The jowl was black and slobbering; the eyes livid. They mesmerized him.

More than half the body was hidden behind the buttress of rock, but the shoulder showed a long bare scar.

The tension was terrible. He was feeling suffocated, as if his clothes had shrunk to pinion him. He could not move. Even if he had not been imprisoned by rock, he could not have moved. Power had left him.

Once before he had met a tiger face to face. But both had sprung aside, and the movement had steeled the nerves. But this tiger never moved or shifted his gaze. A curious thought passed through Tarbutt's mind—was he blind?

Mentally he gave himself up. To his own surprize, he was not afraid. He was merely numb. But his mind was clear, and working rapidly. He noticed things. He had time to wonder who had scored that furrow in the shoulder, and to think what a double-headed monster the reflection in the water made.

Hours seemed to pass.

Then, with infinite deliberation, the great tiger raised his head; gave one last look which seemed to have disdain in it; and drew slowly back behind the rock.

There was no sound of a footfall. The song of the river, lost awhile, came back. There was a lapping of tiny waves at Tarbutt's feet. A fly whined past his ear, and he saw a little whorl of blue smoke creeping from his pipe among the pebbles. Gradually, calculating every fraction of every movement, he raised himself and looked over the buttress of rock—ready any second to plunge into the pool.

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All along the shining shingle to the narrow jaws of the gorge, there was no single sign of life.

He stood up and wiped his forehead. Like a man in a maze he groped for his rod and net. Then, muttering:

"Thank you, my friend. You win," he started to walk down-stream.

HE HAD definitely made up his mind to give up. He had never had the impulse before, and could not have explained it. It was not the result of fear, but rather of a compound of feelings in which fear was mingled with gratitude and superstition and something of respect. In fact, there was so little fear in it that he was not ashamed of his impulse. He had been beaten—that was the long and short of it.

He walked up to the tree where his man was waiting, and was just about to tell him that he was, after all, going back to camp, when he was pulled up short by the very last sound he would have expected—the sound of a fusilade.

It came from across the river, from the strip of jungle which he had come to know like a book. It was a ragged volley, sounding like the fire of a shooting party at a straggling covey of partridges, and it was succeeded by a babble of conversation.

For a moment he stood still, looking round foolishly, for it had been a shrewd blow at his jangled nerves. Then, scenting trouble, he plunged into the river and made for the other side.

As he ran up the beach, he swore doggedly and persistently, for something already told him that the trouble might be a wounded tiger. There was no doubt as to his direction. He could hear shouts under the trees, and see figures.

He dashed through the bushes, and ran full tilt into a party of youths, who were babbling excitedly and looking at the path. They were obviously schoolboys—not one over twenty—and were diversely armed, three with shotguns, two with Winchesters, and one with a muzzle loader. They were looking at a small round patch of frothy blood in the path.

"What in the ——'s name have you done?" Tarbutt gasped.

They told him in snatches.

They were on a mid-term holiday from some college. They always camped here. They had arrived that morning and had sat up in the first likely place they had found on the chance of seeing a stag on its way to the river, or a pig. They had not been ten minutes in the trees before they had seen a bush quiver. Some animal, they had thought, lay down. There had been rustles. Then, thinking that it was a pig rooting, one of them had fired into the bush, and they had all followed suit.

"What happened then?" asked Tarbutt grimly.

"Nothing."

"You saw nothing?"

No, they had seen nothing. One or two of them had thought that they heard something creeping away. So they had all come down and investigated. Then they had come on the patch of blood, twenty yards or so on.

"Hm," said Tarbutt. "Show me that bush."

They led him up the path and pointed out the bush, a thick brier at the side of a little deer track which branched off from the path. On the smaller track, faint on the hard ground, were the splayed *punjas* which he had dreamed of and followed so often. With an inward groan he turned and faced the party.

"Go home, the lot of you," he said. "Cross the river and take the main road and don't stop till you're home. And bear this in mind—if you shoot at something before you have seen what it is, you deserve to be flayed. You might have committed manslaughter. As it is, you've wounded a tiger. You've made trouble. Get!"

They went. He heard subdued conversation as they crossed the river. But he was listening for something else. The jungle was very still, but, far down the strip to the south, a Langur ape was scolding. The sound, much like a cough, was repeated again and again. It meant tiger.

Tarbutt hurried down the path in the direction of the sound.

V

A VILLAGER, driving a bullock cart home in the dusk, saw, at a turn in the track, a great pale shape ahead of him—standing still and seeming to shake. At the same moment his pair of bullocks swerved into the ditch and overturned the cart. So once more a trembling man ran into the village and babbled of the

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white tiger. But he had not seen the blood on the track.

Tarbutt saw it. Patch by patch he marked it, and at every patch he swore.

The irony of it! To have struggled and schemed for a month, day in, day out; to have given his best; then to have heard a parcel of boys with pop-guns down a great tiger—it was too much!

He knew what had happened. A chance bullet from one of the Winchesters had gone well forward, and, finding by a miracle some chink in the mighty mass of muscle, had pierced a lung. But what puzzled him was the doggedness of the wounded animal. Half a mile he would have expected—but that overturned bullock cart was three miles down the road. Where could he be making for? And why?

At every turn of the track he expected to come on a dead tiger, and at every turn he saw only the dim, empty path between dark walls of trees, and here and there that frothy stain in the dust. Whence came that incredible power of holding on?

He was out of the strip now. The little fires that marked the village were behind, while ahead loomed the deep terai forest, pitchy black. Still on.

The new moon came up and made shadows ahead which seemed to limp and halt. Still no end. The track was straight now, stretching forever between pitchy walls of foliage. But nothing moved on it. Yet the tracks and the pools of blood were still there.

The moon had given place to darkness before Tarbutt, weary with following, found that the tracks had ceased to follow the road. The tiger had at last turned aside into the grass. So much he could see with the aid of matches. But he dared not follow farther in the dark.

He lay down and waited for the faint light that heralds dawn.

When the light came, he saw that the jungle was open here—grass, as far as the eye could see, dotted with clumps of trees, and intersected by streams that lay deep between immense banks of reeds.

Very warily, with the dawn, he crept into the grass. It had been trampled, he found, and broken, and in places was flecked with blood as from a coughing fit—but the tiger had not lain down. Soon the grass was over his head, and in front he could see rushes rising still higher. The ground, firm no longer, quaked under his feet. Then his left foot went in deep, and it was all he could do to recover. There was no going on. Ahead was a morass and a stream.

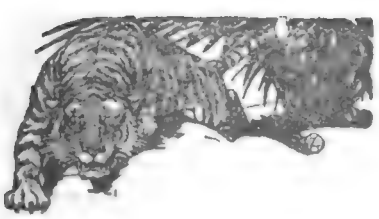
But the end was written in the grass.

The great tiger had rested a long time at the edge of the firm ground. Five feet, ten feet on, was a bottomless pit of mud, guarded by green reeds. His head had lain that way.

At last he had risen to his feet, gathered himself for his last spring—and had leapt. Where he had fallen the reeds were parted and torn. But none could follow there.

THERE are no footprints now in the gorge, or at the drinking pool, or on the road. But wise men say that the white tiger, the ancient and the holy one, still walks at night. And, if strangers doubt, they only nod their heads and say:

"No man has seen him die. He is not dead."



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A FIVE PART STORY ~ PART 1

Author of "Old Misery," "Red Autumn," etc.

FOREWORD

THE thirteen original States numbered some four millions of people, about equally divided between the North and South. The bulk of this population was to be found along the Atlantic seaboard and east of a line marked by the Alleghanies, and occupying some two hundred and twenty-five thousand square miles. West of the mountains were some nine hundred thousand square miles with a white population of less than half a million.

Two-thirds of this enormous and scarcely explored territory were held by the Indians. The few white settlements were separated from each other by great forests and were as a rule located along waterways in Tennessee, Kentucky, western Virginia and western Pennsylvania. Up to 1788 there was scarcely a suggestion of a white settlement north of the Ohio except at Vincennes and Kaskaskia, where French farmers, Canadian traders and Spanish spies followed their respective vocations.

Virginia, the most populous of the States, having impoverished her lands by the cultivation of tobacco, sent the most emigrants over the mountains and to points south of the Ohio. New England emigrants were few below the Beautiful River, their choice being the Indian Shore or the north bank of the Ohio. After 1788 men and women came from the middle States to people the country between the two Miamis. In 1790 the white population north of the Ohio consisted of a thousand at Marietta, about thirteen hundred between the Great and Little Miamis, a thousand in the Wabash settlements and a like number at Kaskaskia.

The arrival in this year of several hundred deluded French settlers at a point on the Ohio opposite the mouth of the Great Kanawha and their futile attempt to build and hold Gallipolis did little to forward the development of the western country. These newcomers consisted of hair-dressers, who would be fortunate if they retained their own scalps; carriage-makers, with no roads to tempt their skill; carvers and gilders with only log huts to beautify; and artizans who found it most difficult to cut down the tall sycamores. Their hard lot can be attributed not to the red men, but to the smooth-tongued land speculators who sold huge slices of virgin territory in Paris.

The Federal Government's difficulties seemed to be endless. The dismay caused by St. Clair's defeat had had no parallel unless one remembered back to the black days following the Braddock catastrophe. St. Clair's "army" was unfit for service and had dwindled rapidly by wholesale desertions. Following this butchery the one thousand miles of frontier, extending from the Alleghanies to the Mississippi River,

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were thrown open to the many war-parties; nor was there security behind the Pennsylvania and Virginia borders.

The people in the little town of Cincinnati were warned of the "serious and melancholy consequences" of going unarmed to church; while the Secretary of War announced that "another defeat will be inexpressibly ruinous to the reputation of the Government." The man who planted corn north of the Ohio did so with Death leering over his shoulder. The Indians insisted that the Ohio River was the north boundary line of the United States and refused to accept any belts which did not show a line extending through the middle of the river.

In August, 1789, the military forces of the United States numbered 672 men. Barely finished with the Revolutionary War, the people were opposed to a standing army; and war-weariness blinded the people to a distinction between a large standing army and adequate military preparations which could furnish an army in times of great peril. By congressional enactment in 1792 the Treasury Department was empowered to make all purchases for the army; and during the seven years the War Department was prohibited from providing its own supplies, poor rations and poor munitions laid a palsying hand on all campaigns against the Indians.

New England, heartily tired of fighting the red men, urged that the Indians be quieted with gifts. Jefferson wished that the Indians might receive a "severe drubbing and then be pacified with gifts, as one campaign is more costly than half a century of presents."

To add to the nation's perplexities there were the acts of individual States which sadly interfered with any Federal program. Kentuckians raided the Wabash tribes while the general Government was endeavoring to effect a lasting peace. Tennessee settlers trespassed at Muscle Shoals. New York lessened Federal influence by voting to buy immunity from the Indians. President Washington complained that the tribes were constantly being irritated by the "land-jobbing of speculators and the disorderly conduct of the borderers." Paper money was becoming a tragedy in every State. Massachusetts contributed Shays' Rebellion, and Rhode Island indulged in demoralizing finance.

Great efforts were made to win Joseph Brant and his Mohawks to the American side. But Brant was not enthusiastic. His reception in England might have flattered a visiting sovereign. He had refused to kiss the hand of George the Third, but had gallantly offered thus to salute the queen. The Prince of Wales had served as his personal escort, while Fox, Burke, Sheridan and a host of other notables and nobles vied with one another in showering him with hospitality.

In sharp contrast to this lavish welcome to England was Thomas Jefferson's proposal to erect a fort at Presqu' Isle, preliminary to asserting America's right to navigate Lake Erie and also serving as a barrier between the Senecas and the Western tribes. For two years this tentative program prevented any amicable understanding with the great Thayendanegea.

But if England nursed the hope that the new republic would disintegrate, and if she persisted in retaining northern posts contrary to the Treaty of 1783, she too was having her troubles. The French Revolution was threatening every Government in civilization. A political party in the United States championed the cause of the French revolutionists, and Citizen Genet had the effrontery to address the American people over the head of President Washington. England, her balance disturbed, allied herself with Spain, Austria, Russia and Sardinia against France and incidentally began seizing American vessels bound for French ports.

It was believed on this side of the water that England's refusal to retire from the Northwest posts was keeping the United States embroiled with the Indians. The English press carried many forecasts of the republic's approaching dismemberment. Lord Lansdowne and others of the governing class were quick to believe this. Lord Sheffield foresaw the western country breaking free from the seaboard States and finding an outlet through the Mississippi. Spain accepted the prophecy most complacently. Many prominent Englishmen were confident that internal disorders would result in the republic changing to a monarchy with an English prince being the first sovereign. It was also talked and discussed on this side of the water, for in August, 1786, Washington expressed himself to Chief Justice Jay—

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"I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchial government without horror."

Jefferson sturdily declared—

"No race of kings has ever presented above one man of common sense in twenty generations."

But England persisted in cherishing her hopes even after Jay had assured Lord Lansdowne—

"We are happy in the enjoyment of much more interior tranquillity than English newspapers allow, or their writers seem to wish us."

However, while England believed time was fighting for her, and while she purposed to cling to the Northwest posts and thereby control the fur-trade, she did not wish to behold the United States engaged in a general war with the Indians. So long as the red danger served to distract the republic's attention from the unsurrendered posts, just so long did the Western tribes' hostility continue to be England's asset. But did a general war result there would be the danger of hostilities being carried against the English garrisons entrenched on American soil; and Britain was not wishing for that.

"Mad Anthony" Wayne, who had been presented with a plantation by the State of Georgia but lacked the funds with which to buy slaves to work it, was named to command a new army of five thousand men. General Henry Knox, Secretary of War, had given three reasons for St. Clair's failure: Lack of dependable troops, want of necessary discipline and the lateness of the season. General Wayne, in building up a reliable army, profited by his predecessor's failure and refused to march against the allied tribes until he had a sufficiency of well-drilled men, and sufficient military stores. As a result of his thoroughness the power of the Northwest tribes was broken, and any foreign hopes of the republic's disintegration went glimmering.

CHAPTER I

THE MOUNTAIN AND RIVER ROAD

IT WAS an old road and a tragic road I was following that early June day in 1793. It was the first great road built by white men to the forks of the Ohio, and it had been of such prime importance in the estimation of England and France that the two empires had crossed the seas to fight for its possession.

As a white man's thoroughfare it owed its existence to the Anglo-Saxon hunger for land. But for many, many centuries before Europeans stumbled upon the unsuspected continent it had been the east-to-west pathway of the buffalo and the red hunter. It was one of the main routes made by the shaggy wanderers in traveling from the Mississippi to the Eastern meadows and salt-licks and back again. Like all buffalo traces it had been sagaciously selected, for it must pass through excellent grazing-lands and take advantage of climatic changes. To sustain the weight of the huge herbivora it always must be of firm foundation.

The buffalo in migrating followed the tops of hills and ridges to avoid drifting snows and treacherous bogs; for this reason did this ancient way climb up and straggle down and present many difficulties in crossing the first great divide between the coastal regions and the Mississippi. From immemorial times the Indians, lured from the substantial fruits of their rude agriculture, had followed this game-path. Before the first boat coasted along the Atlantic shores it was used as a trade-route, over which the shells of the Pacific passed from tribe to tribe to final ownership among the Eastern Indians.

And on this day it stretched before me, by rude settlements, through mighty solitudes, because there had been a time when the red hunters first chased the buffalo. Buffalo trace, Indian trail and white man's road, followed and preserved at a cost of blood and suffering never to be estimated by mortal. Game-path, trade-route and white man's road, paved with tragedies and washed with the tears of the devastated until only God could keep a reckoning of the toll.

It was before the old French-Indian War that the first Ohio company hired Nemacolin, a Delaware Indian camping on Dunlap's Creek, to mark the trail so white settlers might follow it to the Western lands. Over ridge and hill, through the Great and Little Meadows, the Delaware hunter's ax spotted the way from Maryland to the Ohio. Up and down the mountains, through dark and gloomy forests, stalked the ancient trees with the leprous patches

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left by the red man's ax inviting those to follow who could hold.

This blazed path was the outlet for high ambition and land-greed, for daring adventure and gross commercialism. George Washington, a young surveyor, passed over it. Again, as leader of armed Virginians, young Washington followed it to build Fort Necessity. Yet once more he was destined to traverse it, this time with Braddock's proud army to the bloody ending on the Monongahela.

Nemacolin's compensation for initiating this, the most historic highway in America, is not known—probably some beads, a few yards of cloth and a jug of rum. Yet let it not be thought this was the only price paid. Long after Nemacolin passed on to talk things over with the ghosts of ancient men

there were England, France and the Thirteen Colonies still paying, paying; paying by piecemeal with the installments ranging from a humble cabin and a child's soft scalp to the skeletons of an army. And now the United States was taking over the debt, and it did not seem to us of the border that the score would ever be settled.

Of four brothers who marched with Braddock that terrible Summer only one returned. Broken from his wounds, he settled down on the home-place, then took a wife and made a new clearing. When I add that he was my father, that he died when I was ten years old, that my mother soon followed him, it is plain that I, Peter Watson, also contributed toward the cost of the road; and it will not be construed as an exaggeration when I say I always found the course filled with the atmosphere of tragedy.

I can remember climbing on my father's knee as he sat before the roaring fireplace and imitating him as he tilted his head to listen to the night wind howling down the chimney. I would always say—

"It howls like wolves, father."

This to draw out the answer I knew I would receive. For he invariably replied with a mournful shake of the head:

"Worse'n wolves, lad. Most like those red devils when there was the four of us—then three—then only two—Ben, oldest and strongest, holding 'em back till I could git clear. I was only a younker, and I ran for it when he turned his bloody face to me and told me to——"

And his arm around my waist would twitch and shake, and my mother would cross to us and rest a hand on his shoulder until the spell had passed and it became the night wind again instead of a Shawnee war-whoop, and the picture of the savages driving the head of the demoralized army back on the baggage-train faded away. And how merciless a child can be! For never a night when the wind swept across our little clearing to make its threats but that I shivered with tremulous expectation and endeavored to learn the details of that ghastly scene when my uncle, "oldest and strongest" and bloody of face, held the triumphant, screeching savages back until my father by a miracle managed to escape. But my father never added anything to the picture.

The horror of that day must have lessened considerably as I approached my tenth birthday, for during the last year of my father's life the yelling of the wind lost much of its sinister effect, and he would mutter:

"Better climate out there, lad—not so much snow and raw winds. With a tight cabin a man should do well out there."

His words would set me to trembling with a great eagerness to be off on the new adventure. I had seen and had shyly talked with other little boys when their people passed our clearing, bound for the Kentucky country. And I had envied them. My eyes must have glistened in the firelight as my father spoke in terms of praise of the Western land; and at such times there would be my mother standing behind us, her thin face drawn and somber

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a hand on his shoulder and a hand on my small head. Perhaps she feared he would rise at once and start to take up Ohio land. Her horror of the Western country never lessened as the years passed.

So it happened, thirty-eight years after my three uncles met a bloody death with Braddock's blind army, that I, for ten years a forest wanderer and more than once a visitor to the scene of Ben's glorious death, was again hurrying over the Braddock road to find Mad Anthony Wayne and his new army.

Many open places were covered with strawberries on this June day; and if the gray eagle and turkey-buzzard stood watch in the heavens and typified the predatory life, yet close at hand were the yellow titmouse and the little brown fly-catcher. If the howling of wolves cut through the night there also sounded the plaintively sweet song of the whippoorwill or the sprightly songs of the mocking-bird. For singing birds now gladdened the day where they were not to be heard when my father marched off to war. And if the evil beauty of the gliding snake, remindful of the stealthy, painted, red marauder, crossed my path there was the honey-bee as a compensation.

This burly ravisher in his yellow-and-black breeches and striped coat—called by the Indians the "white man's fly"—marked the advance of white civilization and always kept a bit ahead of the settlements. His deep bass buzzing cheered my loneliness, and despite my haste I paused at times to watch him weigh down clover blossoms or tear open tightly sealed buds to take his toll. If the shadow rested heavily on the Ohio country there was the promise of peace and blessings could white wampum ever permanently hang between us and the Northwest tribes.

I had followed Boone's road southwest through Virginia between the Alleghanies and the Blue Ridge and west through Cumberland Gap until it entered the blue-grass country of Kentucky; and I had listened to many a sad story connected with that thoroughfare. I had crossed the northern route, from Buffalo Creek to Albany, and had felt the thrill one must feel in passing through the Western Door of the Long House, which is guarded by the Senecas, and in threading the glades about Onondaga, where the ancient council fire of the Five Nations had burned for many years and where the very air breathes the black myths of the Iroquois.

But there was no path, big or little, which ever gave me the peculiar feeling I always experienced when covering the portage between the Potomac and the forks of the Ohio. Never did a wolf howl near my lonely camp but that I vividly saw my father with his head tilted to hear the exultation of the savages in the night wind, his eyes again beholding the last of his brothers covering his escape. And at times, when my mind was not standing guard against a lurking danger, I could almost fancy that that other Watson, boyish and eager, was swinging along by my side, proud in his new hunting-shirt and confident because of his long rifle, and that behind us marched the fantom army, laboriously making its way to the terrible finale.

Fear is a terrible blight, and more complacent generations can never give due credit to the first settlers west of the mountains. Tomorrow can never fully comprehend the obstacles of today. Those who opened the road to the Ohio country should not be esteemed solely for the number of cabins built and the acreage planted, but primarily for their victory over self and for persisting in an atmosphere of dread.

It is not what they did in building and planting that entitles them to endless remembrance so much as it is the mental handicaps they overcame in the doing. Any man may build a cabin and make a "deadening." But to build a home and put in a crop while knowing the women and children are on the edge of death—that is the great suffering.

From the Summer of '55 up to my June journeying, fear had never been absent from the border. It had been kept alive by the atrocities following Braddock's death, by Pontiac's general war, by continuous raids of small bands and lastly by Harmar's and St. Clair's defeats.

For twoscore Summers the mental strain never lessened. For nearly half a century those of the frontier lived lives of tight-lipped repression, of burning hate. As the border advanced, emotions must be smothered.

Forty years of paying the price had ingrained suspicion and caution in our very beings. There was no end to the dangers confronting us, and we were different from

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those who were born and died east of the mountains. The little delights of watching a bee tear open the end of a bud, of listening to song-birds, of planting and the like, could be indulged in only spasmodically. He who gave himself whole-heartedly to the enjoyments of God's great goodness would be checked off as "killed by Indians."

Incidents, which in a tide-water village would pass unheeded, warned those west of the mountains to run for their lives. A horse galloping in fright from his grazing would send a dozen isolated families scurrying to some central point of defense. A dog barking in the night brought the horrible fear of Indians just outside the door with axes raised to force an entrance. A hired hand's failure to return from his planting at the close of day could be attributed only to one cause. These and many other simple signs warned us of the hovering death. Often women stood guard alone, their husbands ill or absent.

Yet the frontier had never known any other life. We married and raised our families, added to our cabins and cleared more land. I can not recall that we spent any time lamenting our hard lot. It was the only life we had been used to, and few thought of changing it for the safe environment east of the mountains.

I do know, however, that the training which commenced when I was a little child, when my mother would warn me I must not cry, has persisted in its influence. More than once, when in some Eastern town and secure from the savages, I have startled or amused my neighbors by taking alarm at some trivial happening and by placing myself on guard against a danger which could not exist.

And even now, in the Indian Summer of life and at my desk, knowing that the frontier has passed on and left me far behind and that never again shall I have cause to fear the ax or fire-arrows, I find myself welcoming the deep snows of a severe Winter as a barrier to the red horde breaking through the thick forests on the Indian Shore of the Ohio. Such is the force of a thought impressed on the mind in infancy and graved deep by innumerable repetitions of the original cause.

From the signing of the peace in 1783 to Harmar's defeat in 1790 small bands of Indians killed and captured some fifteen hundred white men, women and children in Kentucky alone. When the deaths and sufferings along the border—dating from the French War to St. Clair's defeat—are added, those of tomorrow may comprehend something of the fearful footing.

As my path swung north at Laurel Hill, the last regular ridge of the Alleghanies, and I paused at some cabin to spread my blanket the talk was ever in the same strain. A helpless grandame or a man whose many years of watchfulness had kept him from senility would cry regretfully—

"Such a pity such a likely parcel of young men is going to be killed and sculped by the Injuns like Sin Clair's army was!"

Over and over again I heard this drear prophecy once I announced the purpose of my faring. It was depressing to find a common belief that Wayne's army was doomed to defeat if not annihilation. All through the mountains I found the people saying the new army was more of the same toll we must pay.

It always had been thus. British regulars, American regulars and militia, all had marched into the forest and were not heard from until straggling survivors emerged in a panic and spread in a wide fan of terror-stricken refugees to scatter the sickening news and warn that the Western tribes were once more padding south and east to strike along the thousand miles of unprotected frontier.

Yet those who mouthed such dire forebodings did not leave their cabins and little clearings and seek refuge behind the mountains. Families would come off a creek for mutual defense, but the moment the red tide washed back they were returning to their burned cabins to harvest what was left of a crop.

I should have been strongly affected by this pessimism had I not known something of the new leader. He was called "Mad Anthony" and was considered by many as being a brave, patriotic madman. It was not commonly known that before carrying the works at Stony Point by a surprize attack he had caused to be destroyed every dog within three miles of the point. Surely such caution and foresight were not to be found in one given to impulses. From his prudence and thoroughness in making his plans and examining the ground before striking a blow he might with all reason have been dubbed "Cautious" Anthony. When it came to the attack itself he was a

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madman in energy, dash and indomitable courage.

His appointment to command the new army had been a sore disappointment to Virginia, as she had expected that Henry Lee would be named to succeed St. Clair. Virginia's disapprobation doubtless had much to do in forming the border's estimate of General Wayne. But I who had been with the army at Pittsburg the year before and had seen much of his methods, knew him to be one who would build patiently and most carefully.

That I was now returning by the roundabout way of Laurel Hill was due to my superior's belief that I could be of more service in securing certain intelligences than by acting as armorer, my vocation when enlisting. Incidentally my absence from the army was another proof of the commander's pertinacity in learning all he could about the enemy and his preparations.

THE woods were warm and close, and I was glad to leave them and finish my land travel by entering Pittsburg. I should have enjoyed stopping in the town for a few days and renewing old friendships, but the urgency of my business would not permit. The place was much the same, the merchants holding their wares at a higher price than one would pay in Kentucky, and there was the same abundance of dogs, two to every man as one traveler facetiously declared.

I looked on Eyer's and Grant's hills, around which the preceding year the raw recruits had marched and maneuvered when the signal-gun was fired at Fort Fayette. That was before I had been picked for a peculiar service. I too, with the drums beating the Turkish march, had charged with trailed arms and had perfected myself in the knack of firing and reloading while advancing, keeping at it until with loud huzzas we gained the first open ground toward Mount Pleasant. It was characteristic of General Wayne's thoroughness to insist that we continue cheering while engaged in these mock battles.

At first there had been many desertions at Pittsburg, but as the penalties increased in severity this evil lessened. And at no time was the total anything like the number of men St. Clair lost. My days in that camp had been pleasant enough, and my years in forest wandering had permitted me to carry off my share of the prizes—a gill of whisky—for the best shot at target practise. It was at Pittsburg that the army was formed as a legion, consisting of four sub-legions. One of the most distinct impressions I retain of the Pittsburg days is the mournful bearing of the citizens as they somberly watched us at drill.

With but a brief delay I went to the river and was fortunate in finding a boat about to depart for Marietta and carrying several New England families. I, with my long rifle and fringed hunting-shirt, was a welcome addition, for oddly enough the immigrants did not realize there was no danger from the savages until Marietta was passed. The leader was an Ipswich man by the name of Samson, and all of his band were Massachusetts people as far as I learned.

They spoke of me as a "Buckskin," and I retaliated with "Yankee," two nicknames inherited from the Revolutionary War when all below the Delaware River were Southerners and all above Northerners, Buckskins or Yankees. They did not seem to relish my company although glad to have me on board in event my rifle were needed, and I mixed but little with them.

Eighteen miles down the river we passed the plain occupied by Wayne's second camp when he discovered the imperative need of removing his troops from the Pittsburg grog-shops. That camp was called "Legionville" and was very close to the old Indian-French-English trading town of Logstown, which the Indians abandoned after the capture of Du Quesne in '58. The down-river journey would have been pleasant enough but for my haste to rejoin the army and the solemnity of the company I was in. The "movers," as all immigrants were commonly called, were companionable enough among themselves but seemed shy of striking a close acquaintance with me.

Samson was a dour-faced, fussy man, puffed up with his brief importance as leader and much given to calling his followers to council, or a "town-meeting" as he styled it. These conferences were often held and frequently when the matter under discussion was most trivial. Even in taking his whisky I could not see that the fellow livened up and displayed that amiable humanism which strong drink sometimes uncovers.

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Although the best time for descending the river is during the Spring fresh, beginning in February and lasting three months, or during the Fall rise from October to December, the river was quite alive with boats bound for Limestone on the Kentucky shore, or for Marietta, Cincinnati or the Wabash settlements. Peculiarly enough we suffered only for lack of wholesome water, as the river water was too warm and unpalatable until it had been kept for twenty-four hours.

Used to the quiet of the woods, I found it wearying to be imprisoned with men and women engaged in wordy wrangling and singing lugubrious songs. When differences of opinion developed and promised an interesting situation Samson would spoil the sport by calling a town-meeting, and the minority would seem to be satisfied by this form of self-government and would gracefully surrender to the will of the majority. The minority always knew they were to be outvoted but would insist on a formal vote being taken.

There was only one exception to this method of obtaining peaceable solutions. Hate-Evil Durgin, Massachusetts born and bred, hailing from Essex County, defied precedent by dying hard and often. He was especially bitter when by an almost unanimous vote his proposal to carry a cargo of liquor to Putnam's town on the Muskingum was opposed. Defeated in what he believed to be a prime trading project, he withdrew from his companions and, like myself, held himself apart as much as the confines of the boat would permit. As a result we often stood side by side, staring out on the river. At first we exchanged curt salutes, but gradually fell into conversation.

Durgin's broad-backed coat with its short, straight skirts and large pocket-flaps made him look less than his actual height and served to conceal the sparseness of his figure. His snuff-colored breeches, barely reaching to the knee and ending in a tight ribbon, were secured with brass buckles. His stout leather shoes, strapped to the quarters, differed vastly from my moccasins. His soiled linen stock, fastened with a plain silver buckle at the back of the neck, must have been tremendously uncomfortable under the broiling sun. A round wool hat, low of crown and generous of brim, completed an attire that had been the fashion at the opening of the Colonies' war against England.

His eyes, of a light shade of blue, protruded and gave one the impression that the fellow was continuously amazed at something. After we had talked a bit I set him down as being very tenacious in clinging to a purpose no matter how strongly he might be opposed. He would dispute as heatedly over a trifle as he would over something of real importance.

He was commonly called "Hate" and seemed to prefer the unlovely abbreviation to his full absurd baptismal name. In dubbing him thus fantastically his puritanical parents doubtless thought to provide him with a banner under which he would war against all that was unwholesome. It was an example of New England's quaint fashion of labeling her children, except that in Durgin's case it was much less pleasing than "Thankful-for-Blessings" Perkins, and "Love-Goodness" White, two young women aboard whose demure prettiness seemed to be enhanced when their names were clipped to "Thankful" and "Love".

My first talk with Durgin began by his cold assertion—

"You're a Buckskin."

"You're a Yankee," I retorted in much the same tone.

One sunset afternoon as we floated through a glorious light that paved the river ahead with gold he bitterly complained—

"They've voted me down in every derned meeting we've had."

He confided this as if there were a chance I knew nothing about their town-meetings.

"There'll be a rare call for rum now that Wayne's army is down to Cincinnati," he went on. "Then there's the settlements north of Marietty. Lots of 'em."

"Three," I corrected. "Duck Creek, Big Bottoms and Wolf Creek. They may be deserted by this time. Fourteen settlers were killed at the Bottoms two years ago, only five out of thirty odd escaping death or capture. The families came off the other two creeks and came down to Marietta. A small market for rum even if they've gone back."

"They'll populate fast enough now Wayne's army is on the river. The army's the place to take rum to."

"General Wayne is against any liquor

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trade being taken to his men," I told him. "He wants them to have only what's given with their rations. Seed and farming-tools make a much better cargo."

"I hate like sin to be squelched at every meeting," he grumbled. "Let me open my yawp, and all the men and most the womenfolks will begin hollering me down. I've about made up my mind to quit 'em and let 'em shift for themselves."

His egotism was amusing, but I kept my leathern face straight as I asked—

"If you leave them where will you go and what will you do?"

"May take a notion to land on the Kentucky side; maybe at Louisville. They say that's a likely town."

"Between eighty and a hundred houses with the rapids the busiest spot on the river."

"And maybe I'll keep on down to New Orleans. Just as soon as I can lay by a little money I want to work out a notion I have for doing away with gun-flints and having powder in a hollow needle or a nipple catch fire from the hammer."

This twist of Yankee ingenuity appealed to my sense of the humorous. As an armorer I believed I understood much about firearms, and the idea of igniting powder by a blow instead of by a spark made me smile.

Either he did not observe my incredulity, or else he was above feeling sensitive; he quietly insisted:

"It can be done. It will be done sometime. If it couldn't be done I wouldn't 'a' thought of it. The good Lawd gives us brains to think with. If we think of a new way of doing things, no matter how far-fetched it may 'pear, that's proof that sometime some one will do it."

"Even if we think we can fly through the air like the birds?" I quizzed.

He scratched his head thoughtfully; then the lean jaw was thrust forward, and he was doggedly replying:

"Maybe even that, neighbor. It'll just be a matter of rigging up something to keep you moving after you're shot up into the air."

As we talked further, usually touching upon some unusual theme, I suddenly discovered I was beginning to like him and his eccentric ideas. Our little arguments opened up a world of quaint fancies for me; and from childhood I had been concerned only with the problem—often the danger—just ahead. He was the first dreamer I had met, and his grotesque vagaries did me good. He did me good, and yet it was easy to understand why his companions always voted against him. In resenting his whims and conceits they had acquired the habit of opposing any proposition he originated. I believed this hostility to be the instinct of self-preservation. Having tagged him as a man of dangerous ideas they went against anything he favored; they feared a trap in his most innocent proposals.

He asked me many frank questions about my business and destination. Concerning his own plans he arrived at no definite decision except to repeat his intention to pass beyond Marietta (named after France's ill-fated queen). One day he pressed me so hard in his endeavors to get inside my business that I told him:

"I am going to join the army. On the way down the river I shall try to learn something of a man named Quain. If you hear anything about a man of that name please keep your ears open and tell me."

"I'll remember and do it, neighbor. It's a queer name—Quain."

"He's a queer man," I grimly told him.

He read more from my tone than from my words and said, "Guess he's a bad customer."

Throughout my journeying I had made inquiries about Quain, but the New Englander was the first man I had confided in concerning the renegade since I slipped out of Canada.

"He's a bad customer," I said. "I trust you'll never be so unlucky as to meet him when you are alone."

"Pooh! I won't turn tail to anything short of the ——," he boasted. "And that ain't bragging neither. The Durgins don't brag."

I glanced up and down his tall figure, for tall he was when he stood by my side, his bulging eyes on a level with mine; and on the instant I decided he was no braggart. Scatter-brain and a dreamer perhaps, but too stubborn of soul to give ground before anything that walked on legs. Fanning his face with the heavy hat, he promised me:

"If I git track of that critter I'll let you know. Trying to keep out of his path?"

"I would give much to meet him."

"He may change his name. What's the cuss look like?"

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"He was born white but has turned red in his heart like the Girtys. He takes his orders from Simon Girty."

"Lawd! But he's a rare imp of Satan's! You don't go to say he's here on the river?"

And he swept the north bank with suspicious gaze as if expecting to behold Simon Girty standing on the bank and practising some ruse to lure the boat inshore within reach of an ambush.

"Girty's at the Maumee villages or in Detroit. But Quain is, or was, down here spying on the army. If he's still on the river it's important we should know."

"Meaning you 'n' me, or your Gineral Wayne?" he shrewdly asked.

"Meaning General Wayne."

NEAR the end of the journey when we were within a few hours of Marietta, Durgin gave a sign for me to join him at the stern of the boat. The immigrants were grouped forward to catch their first glimpse of the little town founded by General Rufus Putnam, cousin of Israel Putnam, veteran of the old French war when a youth and in Washington's estimation the ablest engineer officer of the Revolutionary War. Except for the two steersmen wrestling with the forty-foot sweep Durgin and I had the stern to ourselves.

"I've been chewing over what you said about flying through the air," he hoarsely whispered. "It ain't such a darned crazy idea as you've been thinking. I've been fussing a bit with a certain notion your words put into my mind. Guess I'll land at Marietty after all and work on it. There'll be tools there that I can work with. Took a sheet out of the back of old Samson's journal, and he'd be mortal angry if he know'd it. Made sort of a model to prove that a air-boat might be made that'll float on a even keel if I can find some contraption to keep it moving."

He glanced at the steersmen to make sure they were fully occupied with their task and then slyly drew a large sheet of paper from inside his coat.

"Fact is," he chuckled, "I had to borrer more'n one sheet before I got the notion."

He began deftly folding it at one end, bringing each corner to the middle and repeating the process until he had folded each side three times. The result was a long, dart-shaped figure, flat on top and having a keel that began at the tip and gradually deepened as it approached the square end.

"She'll cut up some queer didoes," he muttered. "Tried one in the night but soon lost it, as the light was poor. Now you watch her."

He seized the dart between thumb and finger mid-way along the keel and shot it into the air. The contrivance glided rapidly and most gracefully at right angles from the boat for fifty feet, then caught the following breeze, made a beautiful curve and streaked down stream in a long and bewildering flight.

"In Gawd's great marcy what was that?" bellowed Samson at the bow as he saw the white object take the water far ahead.

"Injun arrer!" screamed a woman.

The men leaped for their guns and axes. One of the steersmen, when he could make himself heard, yelled—

"'Twa'n't no arrer. Just some of Hate Durgin's dad-busted foolishness. I seen him throw something made outer paper."

"No man can make a piece of paper travel like that 'less he has black help," cried one of the movers. "It's plumb onnatural."

Others were entertaining the same suspicion and were believing Durgin had practiced black magic. They advanced to the stern in a body, the men angry and nervous, the women frightened. Samson denounced him loudly—

"Some more of your wicked capers, Hate Durgin. You've been cutting-up ever since this journey started. And here you be a-scaring the women-folks when we oughter be holding a meeting before reaching our future home! Some folks will even say you have truck with the evil one."

And his uneasy countenance told me he was one who suspected a supernatural agency.

"I'm as religious as you be, Joel Samson," hotly retorted Durgin. "And a sight more so!"

"Paper can't travel like that 'less it's witched!" bawled a man on the edge of the group.

"It was only a paper dart," I assured them. "I can make one, you can make one. Just a piece of paper made into an arrow or a dart."

"Then he's gone and wasted good paper that's mortally hard come-by," said Samson accusingly. "'Stead of being a help to this community he's just a clog."

Durgin, who had been a bit abashed at

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causing the commotion, now lost his temper and blazed back, "You want to be boss in everything, Joel Samson. You couldn't be boss back home, but you figger to be boss down here. You're just an old fuss-budget. And you've voted me down for the last time. Yes, siree! You won't git a chance to heap shame on me again. I'm going on right down the river. I'd rather live all alone then to be cooped up with folks who can't see beyond their noses and who are willing you should boss 'em in everything they do. Yes, sir!"

Samson's round face seemed to expand; certainly it flushed beneath the tan. He was quite unable to make a suitable retort but his followers broke out in angry exclamations, one speech smothering another until there was nothing intelligible to be heard. As they paused to catch their breath I did hear one man repeating over and over that Samson was "a safe man", the inference being that Durgin was the opposite.

After a bit the women interceded, calmed the storm and urged Durgin to take back his words and continue on with the band. Thankful Perkins even ventured to plead as an individual and remind my stubborn friend that homefolks were the best neighbors after all. Gathering courage, she wheeled on the red-faced leader and dared to tell him:

"He's a rare one at making and mending things. There was the new sort of a churn he made. None of the rest of you men could make one. We'll miss him sorely if he leaves us."

Durgin lost much of his ire as he stared into her brown eyes, and I believed he remained stubborn solely to enjoy her coaxing. He gravely assured her—

"If they was all like you, Miss Thankful, a body would never want to move on. But they don't understand me; and I understand them too well."

"Going off into the woods to live with Injuns and trap skunks and make a gun that'll shoot itself when he tells it to," jeered a young man who appeared to resent Miss Thankful's intercession.

"No need of going so far to trap skunks," was the imperturbable reply.

"Hush, hush!" begged the young woman. "We must all be friends and stick together."

Durgin beamed on her amiably and surrendered.

"If they'll stop pestering me I'll stay along, ma'am. I'll try 'em once more. Maybe they'll learn——"

"Marietty!" howled a steersman.

Men and women wheeled about and shouted and sang and waved their arms like those who view a promised land. I called to the steersmen to shift the course so as to pass between Duvall's Island and the north shore. Soon the town was in full view.

Much had been done in clearing the timber from the point since I first gazed on Campus Martius, as the huge stockade was called from the New Englander's love of parading his book-knowledge. The ancient mounds and earthworks north of the town were no longer concealed by the forest. Across the Muskingum stood Fort Harmar and the small house where St. Clair made his treaty with the Indians in 1789. On our left, on the Virginia shore and opposite the fort, stood the buildings of Colonel Isaac Williams, who visited the Ohio with the Zanes back in 1769 to select locations for new homes.

Marietta was very compact and therein displayed the difference between the Northern and the Southern settlements. This close grouping of the houses had discouraged Indian attacks; the savages left the town undisturbed and passed on to raid the interior of Kentucky and the outlying Pennsylvania and Virginia settlements and isolated cabins. The town and its outskirts held between fifteen hundred and two thousand people.

It was Boston-planned; and New England thrift, thoroughness and perseverance were at once noticeable. The gardens were well-tilled and neatly kept. Much work had been done in grubbing out the roots and stumps of trees. The first saw-pits had been filled in, and the work of converting the virgin forest into substantial house-timbers was being carried on farther away from the town. Much of the black walnut set aside for furniture when I was last at the point had since been turned into tables and chairs; and very comely articles it made. Thousands of fruit-trees had been set out along the Muskingum, and the wonderful fertility of the deep soil had ceased to be a revelation to the first comers from the North.

I hurriedly bade the immigrants good-by and was one of the first to leap ashore. I hunted up Joseph Swain, one of the early settlers and now engaged in trade. After

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purchasing some salt, a few pounds of cornmeal and a kettle, I put the question I had asked of many old-timers since leaving the head-waters of the Potomac. It was:

"Have you seen or heard of a man called Quain?"

"Some of the hunters and Kentucky men have spoken of him while in here," he cautiously replied. "All I know is what I hear, and I don't want it repeated. But from their tell he must be a bloody rip. They do say he's up with the Girtys and Alex McKee, the British Indian agent. But I'm in trade and haven't time for gossip. I never met the man."

I found two other men who had heard Quain recently discussed, and they, like the storekeeper, assumed he was at Girty's Town on St. Mary's river or at McKee's farm and trading-house below the rapids of the Maumee. I could have told them he had been away from his Northern friends for some time, and have added that there was but one place for him to have come to—the north bank of the Ohio.

But I was collecting news, not spreading it. If Quain were living he would be close to the river and between Marietta and Cincinnati, doubtless nearer the latter town now that Wayne's army was there. As a spy for the Northern tribes he would follow the army. By sticking to the river he would be in position to learn the amount of supplies going to the new camp and to note the number of recruits signing for the campaign.

I had never seen the fellow, and the only description I had of him was of his appearance while living with the Wyandots and Delawares, when he painted and dressed in the Indian fashion. I sincerely hoped he was dead, but I desired to carry something more definite than wishes to headquarters.

Taking my supplies I turned back to the Ohio bank and began my search for a boat. Several of the townsmen, knowing I was from the East, would have talked with me to obtain the latest news, but I could permit of no delay in continuing my journey. I was finishing the last tiny segment of a vast circle, and I wished to have it over with. I came upon a hunter hauling a dugout up the bank. In it were some wild turkeys and the carcass of a deer. Accosting him, I asked—

"Will you sell the canoe? I must get down the river at once."

"You're in a vast hurry," he commented, surveying my stained and tattered forest dress. "Don't see many so keen to join the army. Old Wayne'll git licked all to thunder. Shame too."

I could not afford to quarrel and explained, "I am traveling as messenger to the army. If you'll sell that canoe I can make better time. I can tell from your talk you'd feel bad if the army was whipped."

The canoe was only a log hollowed out, and there was plenty of timber near at hand suitable for making others. Ordinarily I would have thought nothing of digging my own canoe.

"I wish the army well," he slowly replied, "but business is business. Paper money ain't much account out here 'less you can buy something with it. And there ain't nothing I want to buy but powder 'n' lead. I trade pelts and game for whisky and terbacker. Seems to be about all I lack. Sorry, Mister——"

He paused, and I was turning away in disgust when he hurriedly called after me—

"There ain't nothing I'm hankering to have but a pistol."

I halted, and he pointed to the pistol thrust through the sash of my hunting-shirt. I had small use for the weapon and never had had occasion to depend on it in an emergency. At close quarters I always found the ax and knife much more dependable. But I had taken the fellow's measure and knew I should lose nothing by being deliberate. I remained silent for a few moments. Then I turned as if to go, and he eagerly cried:

"I'll swap even."

I handed over the pistol. He was so pleased with the trade that he said generously:

"You can have a quarter of the deer and one of the turkeys. It'll save you two shoots of powder."

The canoe was a little over twenty feet long, eighteen inches wide and as many inches deep. Six feet of the stern were covered by a soiled piece of canvas stretched on hoops. This was a protection from the sun rather than storms. Placing my few belongings aboard I was pushing it into the current when some one lunged against me and nearly knocked me into the water. Before I could voice my resentment a drawling voice was saying—

"Just a minute, neighbor, and I'll lend a

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hand. Hop in and I'll push off and follow you. Let her flicker!"

IT WAS Hate-Evil Durgin. While I stared at him he said in explanation—

"My visit here to Marietty is short and sweet. Worn out my welcome so quick. Don't you worry that I won't be able to work my passage with that other paddle."

"I thought you were going to stay along with that pretty girl."

He sighed dismally and replied:

"Not at the cost of my independence. They just called a meeting on the river bank and voted not to let me have any say in their affairs. That settled it for me. So here I be, keen to go down the river."

"All right," I told him; and we got aboard.

The bottom of the canoe was narrow, and instead of kneeling as in a Northern birch it was necessary to sit with the legs extended, a cramped position that tired one quickly until repetition accustomed one to it.

Durgin groaned in disgust as he wedged himself in; yet his paddle went over the side in an experienced manner.

"I like a birch best," he remarked as we left the shore and struck into the sluggish current.

After five minutes he added, "And after a birch I don't like nothing."

"There can be but one boss during this trip," I warned him.

"I'm harking mighty keen. You push right along, and if I want to quit for any reason I'll drop overboard and swim ashore," he readily agreed.

With this understanding we dropped down the channel between Muskingum Island and Second Island. As Marietta marked the southern limit of safety we were now entering the danger zone. Between the river and the Great Lakes were some five thousand Indians, and we had no settlements on the Lakes because of these savages and the hostile British trespassing on United States soil. From Marietta down the danger would increase with every mile.

Paddling incessantly we made the most of the twilight and felt our way through early evening. By the time we glimpsed a light at Bellepre, opposite the mouth of the Little Kanawha, and were feeling our way between James Island and the north shore, my companion groaned most dolefully and begged:

"In God's good marcy let's land and straighten our legs. I'm fair numb from the waist down."

"We've made only twelve miles. We must push on," I told him. "After you get used to it you won't mind."

"By the same token one might get used to ——," he growled.

Bellepre was left behind, but before we had covered the thirteenth mile Durgin nearly upset us by trying to work his hips out of the vice. I harshly upbraided him for his carelessness. He recklessly retorted:

"I'll bide by my word. Guess I'm clear of the danged trap. Just hold her steady while I drop overboard. We must be near shore."

I told him to keep quiet while I found a landing; for we must have some sleep and now was as good a time as another. We nosed in under the willows, tied up and gained the top of the bank. Durgin groaned and sighed and insisted it was impossible for him to straighten up.

"I'll walk after this—Injuns or no Injuns," he bitterly told me.

"Walk you shall if you can't stand my pace in the dugout," I warned him.

Then I added for encouragement, "Tomorrow will find you good for thirty miles without minding it as much as you have this leg of the trip. Inside of three days you'll feel as if you'd always traveled in a dugout."

He was for building a fire and camping on the spot, but I insisted on moving back to the second river-bench among the ash and maple where we might locate a spring and suffer less from mosquitoes. Had we been nearer Bellepre I should have sought shelter there, for I had had my fill of sleeping on the ground and held rheumatism to be a worse enemy than the red men. I paused at the top of the bank long enough to fix the spot in mind, depending on my sense of distance traveled from it rather than on what the eye could reveal.

Then, carrying blankets and rifle, I led the way up the bank, searching with my feet for a trail running north. The forest crown shut out the light of the stars, and the blackness of the woods was almost opaque. Twenty paces from where we had left the dugout I came upon one of the numerous north-and-south paths and

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turned into it. Durgin complained over my shoulder as we made for the second terrace until I impatiently told him to go back, turn to his right, take twenty strides and remain by the canoe, or go to the ——.

He ceased fault-finding. He insisted now that the path meant a tavern and expressed the hope we should find a hot dish awaiting us and a large quantity of spiced cider and a dram of whisky. In his ignorance of the Ohio country I do not believe he would have been surprized if we had come to a hostel equal to the Indian Queen in Baltimore or some of the famous New York or Boston inns.

We came to a path branching off to the northwest but held to what I believed to be the main trail. Durgin, less violently, suggested we halt, but I knew each step was taking us farther from the river mists and held on. We had not walked many rods before we sighted a cabin-window rosy with light, such as comes from a fireplace. I told my companion—

"That's an outlying cabin. We'll sleep under shelter. All your fussing has been wasted."

"Just wanted to see if I'd forgot how to fuss," he sheepishly replied.

The path gave forth no sound, and with shelter assured Durgin became silent. Lights at night are deceptive as to distance. We walked for a minute or two without apparently bringing the glowing window any closer. Durgin in disgust muttered:

"Guess some darned fool with a lanthorn is moving back as fast as we go ahead."

"It's a fireplace light filling a small window," I told him.

A short, sharp, yelp, too quickly terminated to be a scream, cut through the still woods.

"What 'n' —— is that?" whispered Durgin.

"Nothing that matters," I answered, yet much puzzled to explain the brief outcry. "If there were any signs of Indians down here we'd have heard about it at Marietta."

I knew the cry was not caused by Indians; and yet it had a quality that disturbed me. I tried to make myself believe it was the interrupted howl of a dog even while believing it to have been a human voice.

Almost before we could realize it the cabin was in the immediate foreground. We could distinguish the outlines of the structure and see it was in a clearing, for the stars shone. It was long enough to be a trading-house or a small tavern, although for the latter it should have been located nearer the main river-trail and not back here where the willow growth left off and the maples and ash began. We halted, and as I wiped the sweat from my head and felt the perspiration trickling down my chest and legs I wondered why one should have a hot fire in the fireplace. In the warm months it was customary to do the cooking in an outbuilding. After drawing closer I whispered to my companion to wait for me. I left the path, stole to the side of the cabin and glanced through the window.

A powerfully built man, well past middle-age if a white beard and closely cropped gray hair were any indication of years, was in the act of withdrawing his left hand from under a wolfskin that hung against the wall. In the other hand he held a lighted candle. The candle suggested a recent entrance from another room, one that was unlighted by the fireplace. Durgin disregarded my command and advanced toward the door. The man heard his steps, for he jerked his head about, his eyes wide with questioning. Blowing out the candle, he snatched up an ax and with the lithe grace of a cat sprang to the door.

FALLING back to the path, I called out—

"Inside the house! Two travelers looking for a chance to spread their blankets."

The door was slowly pulled half-open, and I knew the hand resting behind it was clutching the ax.

"How'd you come to walk out here through the settlement and chance finding lodgings in the woods?" was the suspicious and natural query.

I explained how we had landed from a dugout because my companion was unused to that mode of travel. He heard me through, and for a few moments I believed he would refuse us entrance.

Then he called, "Come in"; and I heard the ax clump on the hard earthern floor.

As we passed by him and I dumped the blankets on the floor and stood my rifle against the wall he said:

"Have to be careful with Injuns and —— renegades and river-pirates sneaking around. But you look and sound honest, and any of those —— would have shot me

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through the winder and done their talking afterward."

"This is Hate-Evil Durgin from Massachusetts, a stranger to the country. I'm acting as his guide until we reach Cincinnati. My name's Peter Watson. Just come through from Maryland."

"Squat and rest while I find something to eat and drink," he invited us, his face losing its suspicious expression.

We seated ourselves on log stools and before busying himself with supper he informed us:

"My name's Hatton. Been trying to do a little trading with the Injuns, but this cussed trouble has sent 'em scooting back to the Maumee and I'll have to move on. Think I'll go to the Illinois country. Even the Shawnees are quitting their Scioto towns. But you're an old hand on the river."

This to me. I nodded. He shifted his sharp gaze to Durgin and mused—

"A new mover, eh? Well, there's lots of prime land if ever folks dare take it up. But you movers don't come alone as a rule. Where's the rest of your party?"

Durgin rubbed his aching legs and volubly recounted his trip on the flatboat and his reasons for quitting the immigrants at Marietta. Our host smiled and seemed to be amused at the quaint recital. Then he turned to me and prompted me to make an explanation of my business if I cared to, by repeating:

"But you're an old hand on the river."

"I've been up and down the river quite a bit," I responded. "Just now I'm on my way to join the army."

"Peter Watson, making for Wayne's army at Cincinnati," he repeated slowly. "A good Scotch name. You're traveling ahead of supplies, I s'pose."

"No. Returning from a bit of an errand."

"A mighty long errand seeing the time it took to do it," chuckled Durgin, who had learned something of my wide wanderings from our casual conversations on the boat.

"I see," murmured Hatton, just as we all say it when we see nothing at all. "A long-ish sort of an errand, eh? Well, we're all keen for the army to get after the red —— and give 'em their needings. Maybe trade will pick up when the Injuns quit the war-path and go back to hunting. For a man called 'Mad', Wayne seems to be slow in starting."

Criticism of the general was not to be tolerated, and I coldly reminded him—

"Harmar and St. Clair listened to folks saying that same thing. They started out too late in the season and with too few men. What men they had were untrained."

"Of course, of course," he readily agreed. "Too much advice heaped on 'em. Wayne's a cool one. When he does start he'll make the fur fly."

He stepped to the fireplace, tossed on some dead branches and poked the logs with a long iron. I remarked—

"You see many men passing up and down the river. You must hear all the river talk."

He dropped the poker and turned back.

"Too far back to see any one 'less they happen to be traveling from the shore trail and wander up here," he replied. "Only those who have some pelts to trade visit me. Some of them are carrying their trade to Bellepre. I've been thinking I might do better to set up a store in Cincinnati. From the few that drop in here I hear some of the things going on and much that never happened."

"Did you ever hear any of them speak of a man named Quain; a man who turned renegade several years ago after river-pirating made the river too hot for him?"

He pondered for a bit and then slowly shook his head.

"I may have heard the name, but I don't remember it. I've only been here a scant year. I found this house empty and took it over. Owners must 'a' been killed or moved away. No one's fussed over my being here. Man you speak of must be up North with the Injuns if he turned renegade—. There, there! Hear me run on Clear forgitting your meat and licker."

My stomach rebelled at the prospect of a long delay while he cooked meat at the fireplace. He left us, walking softly as one does in avoiding to awaken a sleeper. He passed through a door at the end of the room. The door consisted of a buffalo-hide pegged to the wall and masking the opening. As he pushed it back I could see no signs of a light beyond. But the darkness bothered him none, for he quickly returned. Durgin and I rejoiced on beholding a platter of meat already cooked. He also brought some coarse bread and a jug.

A plank laid across two barrels provided us with a table. My companion may have

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hated evil, but he took kindly enough to the strong liquor. At first it worried me to see him fill a pewter mug nearly to the brim and pour it down like so much cold spring-water. Hatton chuckled as he refilled the mug and said:

"I like to see a man who ain't afraid of his drink. You're after my own heart, Mister."

"I don't intend for it to get the best of me," modestly replied Durgin as he filled his mouth with bread and meat and washed it down with the fiery stuff. "Licker has its uses if you don't abuse it."

Beyond making him a bit garrulous and a bit boastful of the things he planned to invent I could not see that his repeated drams had any effect on him. I was accustomed to border ways and hard-headed drinkers, but such wholesale imbibing was not for me. Hatton neglected me to ply my companion with questions, and from his chuckles and smiles I inferred he was vastly amused at the whimsical remarks of the New England man. And yet he learned nothing that Durgin had not told me when perfectly sober.

"You oughter make a lot of hard money if you can do what you say you can," declared Hatton.

Durgin, holding his mug half-raised, confidently retorted—

"Hard money? Give me a black beetle's chance and I'll own this whole darned river before I'm through."

Hatton laughed loudly and confessed, "And here's me, bound to die like I always lived—mighty onery and poor. And none of Wayne's spies ever have a chance to get rich. Peter Watson, I'd be surprized to hear you say you'd ever taken time to locate a likely parcel of land."

I had not said I was Wayne's spy, yet his hitting on the truth was not remarkable in the light of my and Durgin's admissions. I told him—

"I hold myself lucky to have kept my hair."

He became grave and stroked his beard.

"If only St. Clair had had his spies out," he said regretfully, "his army wouldn't 'a' been cut to pieces as it was. There ain't much credit in being a spy, as the work has to be done so that mighty few people ever know about it. But it's mighty important work, just as important as it's dangerous. A man who can do it oughter get extra pay and a heap of glory after he's finished the job. How 'd you find things up North, Mister Watson, if I might ask?"

"Fine," I glibly lied, for I must give some answer and the truth must be told to General Wayne first. "Indians are beginning to believe the British are using them to rake chestnuts from the fire. The British promise them much and give them guns and powder. But Blue Jacket and Little Turtle are beginning to realize they'll get no help when it comes to the fighting. They'll meet our commissioners very soon now and make a lasting peace."

"But what if they stick to the Ohio as the boundary line?"

"Then there'll be no peace. But they'll come to an agreement on that, some sort of a compromise. Little Turtle is sick of the fighting.

"Well, I do hope they'll make a peace they can keep. What'll they do with that man Quain when they catch him?"

"Hang him."

"And I'd like to help pull on the rope! Still I figger he can't be worse 'n' McKee, Matthew Elliot and the Girtys."

"All of them should be hung. Those you name are more dangerous than Quain because they have more brains."

He shook his head.

"It's a 'tarnal shame such men as they are can keep the Injuns stirred up!" he exclaimed. "I figger it would help things amazingly if a hundred picked men could be sent out in small parties with orders not to come back till they had the scalps of all them renegades. Out of the hundred there oughter be some who'd break through to Girty in the Shawnee towns, to McKee's farm, and even snag Elliot at Detroit."

I agreed to this but was not inclined to talk, for the heat of the room was becoming intolerable. I had eaten heartily, had drunk a dram and it did seem as if my body had soaked in all the warmth from the fireplace. Again I wondered why there should be such a hot fire. My glance at the burning logs as I threw open my hunting shirt permitted my host to read something of my thoughts and he volunteered—

"The rheumatiz frets me powerfully in these wet bottoms. I'm trying to bake it out. I'm figgering to shift back on top of a hill among the beeches where it'll be dryer."

"It's master warm in here," said Durgin as he wiped the sweat from his eyes.

"You feel it more'n I do," said Hatton.

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He lighted the candle and started toward the back room, then turned back and set the candle on a barrel near the window.

"My back room is pretty well cluttered up with trade-goods," he explained. "I've hoped this trouble would simmer down so's I could make a profit off the Maumee and Scioto towns." Then he added, "I can see it's too warm for you to sleep here."

I nodded vigorously.

"I think I can clear away enough so's you two can have room for your blankets in back. I'm that pestered with rheumatiz I always sleep out here before the fire."

"We'll help. Let us do the clearing away," I urged.

"No. I know where everything goes and can do it quicker'n I could show you. I sha'n't make company of you. Rough and ready; take me as you find me. You just wait a bit and have another mug of the liquor, and I'll be back in no time."

As he started to leave us Durgin suddenly asked, "Where's your dog?"

Hatton looked puzzled and Durgin explained—

"Heard something I thought was a dog a-howling as we was coming up the path."

Hatton shook his head slowly and stroked his beard. Then he laughed softly and said:

"I remember now. You must have heard me. Sort of a yelp, eh? Chopped off short? That was me. Twisted my leg in the back room and made it hurt most mortal, it's that tender and sore from rheumatiz. And when I'm hurt enough to howl like that I'm hurt a heap."

And still chuckling at himself he walked with a hobbling gait to the hidden door. I would have sworn he had been spry enough in his movements until now.

"Hi! You've forgot your candle," called out Durgin.

He was about to pull the buffalo-robe to one side. He hesitated a few seconds and answered:

"Don't need it. Just a habit to think I do. I'll be back in a couple of minutes."

He passed from our sight. Durgin stared at me thoughtfully and pursed his lips. After a minute I pricked my ears for some sounds of our host preparing our bedroom. It continued deathly quiet beyond the robe. Durgin too was listening and half-closed his bulging eyes as he darted me a questioning glance. Slowly his gaze traveled to the candle burning by the window. This turned his profile to me, and I saw the one eyebrow crawl up in an arch of speculation. Suddenly he leaned forward, holding his round hat by the brim, and fanned out the candle.

"Enough heat in here without that," he whispered.

I rose and moved about a bit. Some of the burning brands slid off the logs to the hearth. I took the poker and pushed them back. My efforts dislodged something in the ashes which I decided to be a horn button. Feeling about with the poker I turned up three more buttons. And I fancied I caught the odor of burned cloth.

"WHAT'N tophet does it mean?" whispered Durgin's voice in my ear.

I jumped nervously, for I had not heard him approach.

"This fire is good for burning garments as well as drying out rheumatism," I murmured.

"Burning garments?" he slowly repeated. "Is he so rich he can burn up clothing? Good Gawdfrey! You mean this fire's meant to hide something, to burn up something he don't want nobody to ever see?"

I gestured for him to be silent, and I stepped to one side of the small window. There was a dull murmuring down the path. It grew into a noisy wrangle of voices. Several men were approaching and were talking carelessly. With an abruptness that was startling the talk ceased.

"I don't like this," I whispered to Durgin. "We must clear out."

I secured my rifle and blankets, while Durgin, unarmed and sensing the need of a weapon, snatched up the ax Hatton had dropped behind the door. As I would have opened the door my companion caught my arm and advised me—

"Through the back room! That feller must 'a' left the house that way. Burning clothes! Hiding something!"

There had been nothing to instil this feeling of danger beyond the horn-buttons in the ashes and the furious fire blazing on a hot June night. There was no evidence that the newcomers meant mischief; yet I did not hesitate to follow the New Englander. As we darted to the end of the room I remembered how Hatton had busied himself with the wolfskin. And I paused long enough to sweep it aside.

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Both Durgin and I gasped in horror as we beheld the long knife stuck in a log. It was dark with stains that had not had time to dry. The sharp outcry, cut off almost as soon as it had commenced, the bloody knife and the clothing burned in the roaring fire, all became so many links in a terrible tragedy. We had barely missed seeing Hatton emerge from the back room with the knife gripped in his hand. I saw, or thought I saw, several dark spots on the earthen floor leading from beneath the buffalo-hide to the wall where the knife had been concealed.

"—— work has been done here!" hissed Durgin, his eyes sticking forth like balls of light-blue glass.

I pulled back the robe, and he darted ahead of me. We were in darkness once the robe fell in place, but enough starlight filtered into the little clearing to mark the open door ahead of us. Our host had stolen through the end door and had left it open so as to avoid advertising his departure. Durgin, still in the lead, exclaimed aloud and jostled back against me.

"Go on!" I hissed.

"Oh, Lawd! Oh, what unlawful work!" he groaned. He found my hand and pulled it to one side and rested it on the body of a man reclining on a built-in narrow bed some four feet from the floor.

The briefest of examinations was enough to tell me the man was dead and had died very recently, and before I snatched my hand away from the naked form I knew he had died most foully.

"He burned his clothes!" muttered Durgin.

"For ——'s sake let us get clear of this place!" I cried, suddenly falling into a panic as the ruthless brutality of the crime overwhelmed me.

We passed outdoors. I took Durgin by the arm to save him from blundering into tree or stump and guided him across the end of the little clearing into a grove of sugar-maples. With all the Ohio country at my back to play hide-and-seek in I mastered my nerves and paused to listen to the men now well up to the front of the cabin. Hatton must have entered the house while we were ducking into the grove, for now he sprang through the doorway and yelled:

"They're gone! They mustn't get away! He's Wayne's spy! He was asking about me. You fools had to come with enough noise to be heard on the Scioto."

"Fool yourself, Quain," some one harshly retorted. "If you'd showed the candle we'd known we must come sly-like."

"I left it burning. They must 'a' blown it out. Shows they was suspicious. Selly and Bount, come with me to the back room. Rest of you scatter and head them off from the river."

Before I knew what he was up to, Durgin had stepped clear of the trees and had hurled the long ax at the group of men before the door. As I dragged him back a man yelled—

"Good ——! Quain's down and done for!"

"—— him! I fetched him most mortal!" panted Durgin as I drew him away.

Quain. It was all so simple, so clear, that I have often marveled why I failed to guess it after I had been five minutes in the fellow's company. That the ax had probably killed him was too good news to believe. I bustled Durgin through the growth and struck into the path. The confusion of finding their leader knocked down by a mysterious assailant gave us this short lead.

Then a voice, rejoicing that Quain had been hit by the handle of the ax and was not seriously injured, spurred me to great endeavors. I drove Durgin ahead of me for the river, striving to keep him from blundering from the beaten path. For nearly a minute after striking the path we enjoyed our advantage unpursued.

Then came the hoarse cry of a man in a fearful rage, more like the voice of a wild beast than a human being; and we knew Quain had recovered his senses. He began spitting orders, and the men took up the search for us. We started to run. Durgin's crashing steps soon betrayed our position. We turned into the main trail, and I began counting paces. Having estimated the distance the best I could I slipped down the bank and under the willows. Durgin floundered by me. We were still groping for the dugout when a man came to halt just above us.

Durgin tripped and fell.

"Be darned and be ——!" he roared.

The man shouted for his mates to hurry but showed no inclination to come down the bank to find us. Instead he discharged a gun, the bullet going wide. I returned the fire to discourage him and heard him racing back along the path.

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"At them! At them! They've got only one gun!" screamed Quain, now entering the river trail.

I caught Durgin's shoulder and tried to drag him along.

"It's the canoe!" he faintly explained. "Run into it and nearly busted my ribs."

I got him aboard, cut the rope with my hunting-knife, pushed the dugout from under the willows and leaped in. A ragged volley of lead tore down the bank, but only a few of the bullets reached the water.

"After them before they can load that gun!" howled Quain.

The men dashed down the bank as we were swinging out into the current. I paddled furiously down-stream while Durgin, forgetting to use a paddle, wasted his breath indignantly demanding:

"Ain't you going back to that settlement and tell folks what sort of a bloody scoundrel is living near 'em? And him a murderer this very night!"

"The dead man is past helping," I replied. "By the time we could make the village the body would be weighted with rocks and thrown into the river. We would have no proof. We didn't even see the body. Once headquarters knows Quain is on the river there will be a score hunting for him. He quit the Maumee nearly a year ago and dropped from sight. Under the name of Hatton he's been acting as leader of river-pirates and as a spy for the Indians. He and his men have kept close watch on the army."

"I only wish the ax had been all edge! If I could only git another crack at him!"

"You may get your wish," I grimly consoled him. "Don't think for a second we'll go down the river unchased. Quain knows his river game is up if we get clear, and that he must hurry back to the Indian towns on the Maumee. But if he can overtake us and send us after the dead stranger he can keep on living here as Hatton."

"Gimme that other paddle! We're just dawdling along."

CHAPTER II

NEW TRAVELING COMPANIONS

WE COVERED ten miles; but it was largely a matter of luck that we did not ground, for I kept near the bank so as to land quickly did a pursuing canoe come upon us. The walls of the forest on both shores were so much ebony, and a thick mist shut out the starlight. I do not remember that we saw the moon from the time we began our flight until we went ashore in the mouth of the Little Hockhocking and concealed the dugout under the low hanging willows a few rods up-stream. It lacked an hour to sunrise and the early mists were still rising when we took our blankets and some food and returned along the south bank of the stream to a spot where we could discover any boats coming down the river. Durgin was opposed to separating from our dugout, but after I explained that the craft would be useless and we would be bottled up did Quain's band enter the Hockhocking he ceased his opposition. One of Durgin's most pronounced faults was his readiness to criticize and object to the simplest measures.

Whereas the first twelve miles of travel had punished him cruelly this last stage had not added to his suffering. In fact, if anything he felt better than when we landed to find the murdered man in the lone cabin. As we were settling down in our hiding-place there was a dull booming of several guns over on the Kentucky shore. Durgin displayed much uneasiness and expressed his belief that the savages were raiding some cabin.

I doubted this, although several small bands were out. But if the Indians were to attack settlers they would wait and time their assault so that they could have the night to cover their retreat across the river and through the forests to the Auglaize or Maumee. If the guns meant an attack on a flatboat they were too far up-stream. A rock on the Kentucky shore, opposite the mouth of the Scioto, was their favorite look-out for river craft. Kentucky now had a population of more than seventy thousand (including some ten thousand negroes), and the time was past when the Shawnees could descend the Scioto, cross the Ohio and range almost at will through the wonderful country.

Later we heard the voices of men and the shriller tones of women; we decided a flatboat of movers had taken alarm at something and had let loose a blind volley. I advised Durgin to sleep, for after a bit of rest we must be on our way. He insisted he was hungry and must eat. I pointed to the fresh meat and told him:

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"Then eat it raw. There's too much risk in cooking a kettle now."

He mumbled, probably in argumentation, and pulled a blanket over his head to foil the mosquitoes. He was soon breathing heavily. I made up my mind to wake up in two hours and soon was asleep. I could not have slumbered for more than an hour before my eyes opened and I was striving to determine what had alarmed me. Woods and river sounds were normal, and none of these had aroused me. Down the river and close to the Kentucky shore floated a flatboat which disappeared around a point even as I gazed.

To secure a better view of my side of the river I slipped down the bank. Hugging the bank above me was a long dugout holding six men. One with a white beard I identified as Quain. They were advancing with no appearance of haste, and by their keen search of the bank I knew they were methodically searching for signs of our landing. Fearful lest they discover our hiding-place from some careless move or speech of my companion I scrambled up the bank. Durgin opened his mouth to speak, but I clapped a hand across his face and whispered for him to make no sound.

Then I explained our danger and stated that the enemy would surely enter the mouth of the Hockhocking. He showed up well, even as he had in Quain's cabin. And had he possessed a gun the situation would not have been so one-sided. With soft dips of the paddle the long dugout entered the stream and drew up to the north bank.

Quain evidently had given his orders at the start, for as the dugout nosed into the bank three men softly climbed out and were quickly concealed from view. The dugout swung across to our bank and was hidden. There was a delay of a few moments; then we glimpsed the three men at the top of the bank and stealing up-stream.

"They'll find our canoe inside of a few minutes," I whispered to Durgin.

He nodded gravely and replied, "It's a fair swap. Let's take theirs and git out."

His was good strategy. After discovering our dugout they would probably assume we had withdrawn into the woods to cook our kettle or sleep, and they would spend some time in searching for us. Reminding my companion to use great care I led the way down the bank, untied the rope and got him aboard. Wading up to my waist I launched the dugout into the current before drawing myself aboard. We rounded the point into the Ohio and keeping well inshore worked fast. We soon placed a bend between us and the scoundrels. Durgin wasted no breath in questions except as he shot over my shoulder the one query:

"Where to?"

The Big Hockhocking was about ten miles below. If we made its mouth unseen and entered to hide, Quain's men would be likely to search it before proceeding. On the other hand we could not expect our two paddles to keep a safe lead against the six men in our smaller craft. As the race would not be to the swift there remained the choice of taking to the shore before or after reaching the Big Hockhocking, but I dared not to enter the river. Durgin was not broken in to our mode of travel, although improving fast. Each of our pursuers would prove to be a veteran river man.

"We'll land at the first likely spot and let them go by," I told him.

I did not fear being overtaken in the woods provided Durgin could keep up. Even if we were followed ashore I was confident I could strike into one of the trails that—long before the settlers came to the country—connected the Delaware towns on the Muskingum with the Shawnee towns on the Scioto. Bend after bend slipped by, and still I deferred making a landing. Each time we turned a point Durgin looked back to see if the enemy were in sight. It was plain they had spent more time than I could have hoped for in hunting for us in the woods. My plans were changed by an unexpected incident.

On turning a point, with the river still clear behind us, we beheld a smoke ahead and on our side. We swerved out from the shore, fearing an ambush by a small and ambitious war-party masquerading as white hunter's camp; I exchanged the paddle for my rifle and directed Durgin to hold the course I had set.

We had been seen as soon as we rounded the point, for a man in a hunting-shirt was standing at the edge of the water and waving his hand to us. His long white beard placed him well along in life.

"Take me off!" he shouted through his hands. "My canoe got adrift last night!"

Stories of white decoys used by red men had been thick along the river since the

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coming of the first settlers. I was never able to substantiate one of these yarns, although there must have been some truth behind them, and I did not refuse his plea because I feared a trap. We simply did not have time to act as rescuers as long as the old fellow was in no deadly peril.

"Keep going," I told Durgin, taking the paddle again.

The sluggish current veered in toward the old man. Before my efforts, added to Durgin's, could set us out from the shore we found ourselves within pistol shot.

"Can't stop," I called to him, lamenting the necessity of raising my voice although his own cry had carried far already.

In a flash he was behind a rock with only the tip of his fur hat showing, and the muzzle of his long rifle was centered on me.

"Take me off," he commanded. "If you don't you won't have much use for time."

Cursing softly I spoke to Durgin, and the dugout shot alongside his position. With great agility for a man of his years he sprang from cover and was in the canoe ahead of me before I could think of retaliating for his brusk manners.

"Bust me over the head if you want to," he invited. "Or gimme a paddle if you're in a tarnal hurry."

And there he was, seated with his back to me and his rifle in the bottom of the dugout.

I passed him a paddle and wondered what was best to do. While I was considering the advisability of reversing the situation and forcing him to go ashore he explained, "I'm Podge. Old Podge. Just had to git down the river."

"You're the man who's afraid of Indians!" I exclaimed, recalling stories I had heard about a man of his name.

"Afraid ——!" he snorted. "Injuns as Injuns don't worry me any. But there's one Injun who keeps me fretted up. A Delaware. White Tom."

My recollections were further refreshed.

"You killed his son."

"At Big Bottoms, above Marietty. Youngster's first war-path. They bagged nearly thirty whites in killed and captured. Yep. I bagged the youngster."

"And whenever you enter a settlement you imagine his father's hanging around, waiting for a chance to get you," I completed.

"Stranger, you hit it right in the ear. S'pose I'm gitting weak-minded in my old age, but the notion that some one is always waiting to catch me, some one I can never lay eyes on, gits on my nerves. Don't feel that way when out spying for Gineral Wayne. Don't bother me a bit when I'm sneaking round the villages on St. Mary's and St. Joseph's rivers. But let me git back to the river, where there ain't no Injuns nowadays, and some one finds Injun signs, and I begin to figger that White Tom, the Delaware, is looking for me."

"My name is Peter Watson. I am on Wayne's business, and you've made me take you aboard at the point of your rifle. What's to hinder me from blowing a hole through you now or making you swim for it?"

"I just had to be took off," he calmly answered. "You'll find my hide ain't any tougher'n the next man's. Shoot if you hanker to. As to swimming, I'd ruther be shot then drowned. I'm a mighty poor swimmer."

Of course I was helpless. I could only say:

"You've hopped into the fire nicely. We're running away from some scoundrels headed by a man called Quain——"

"Quain!" he roared, jerking his head around and glaring at me angrily. "And you run from that snake? Where is he? Let's turn and go back."

"Not so fast. There are six of them. Six rifles. We have two rifles. My business is to reach Cincinnati; not to fight."

"If they keep up the chase we'll tucker ourselves all out. And I hate like —— to feel some one is hunting me."

Speaking for the first time since our passenger came aboard, Durgin dryly remarked, "According to what I've heard you two talk, I'd say Mister Podge is a trifle bashful about meeting with the Injun whose son he killed."

"White Tom has more guts than Quain," muttered Podge. "Then again a Injun never makes it a wring in the open. Here we've got the whole river. Let White Tom swim out from the Indian shore to git me standing on the Kentucky shore, and I'll take a knife and ax and be mighty well tickled to swim to meet him. And I ain't no shakes on swimming. But to be jumped from cover and have my face painted black for the fire-post is different. It's the sort of

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death that dogs my steps without casting a shadder that gits on my nerves."

I had not yet forgiven his manner of joining us, and I broke the talk by announcing:

"Podge, so long as I'm in this dugout I'm the captain."

"Let it be so. Who's caring?" he replied.

"My friend here is Hate-Evil Durgin."

"Why'n —— brag about his name?"

"Let my name alone, or I'll have my hooks in your old carcass the minute we stand on land," warned Durgin.

"Needn't be touchy. I didn't name you," gently reminded Podge.

"Durgin and I need rest. We must land and sleep a few hours. You shall stand guard."

"Why not sleep in the dugout?"

"I can, but Durgin isn't used to it," I replied.

"All right, Gineral Watson."

Then to my companion, "Mister Durgin, you didn't pick your name. I ain't blaming you."

Durgin made inarticulate sounds; I knew he was far from being appeased. I warned the two of them there must be no discord, that we must stand together, and repeated that we needed sleep. No longer was I resenting Podge's forcible intrusion. Aside from his fear of White Tom I knew he would gladly fight his bigness and enjoy doing it. Nor was his dread of the lurking Delaware father to be wondered at. The sensation of being dogged had taken on the proportions of a superstition; and many of our pioneers, brave as the bravest, were given to quaint beliefs engendered by their dangerous environments.

I have seen rugged Scotch-Irish Indian fighters thrown into a panic because a small bird blundered into a cabin to flutter helplessly about. Such a happening was believed to forecast the worst of luck to some member of the company. I have seen a score of dare-devil borderers, hot on the path of fleeing Indians, turn morose and glum because one of their number had dreamed of the "red doe," an infallible sign of death. In short, with so many chances of being killed and with so many slain by the Indians, anything that attained the dignity of an ill-omen was quite likely to be justified by blood during any Summer of Indian fighting.

So it was not remarkable that an old man should fear the vengeance of a redoubtable warrior, whose only son he had slain. I doubt if Andrew and Adam Poe would have cared to fall in with a band led by Half King, the Wyandot, after they killed his two sons. Ties of kinship are as strong and enduring among Indians as among white people; I have often believed them to be stronger and less selfish. And personal enmity seldom recognizes white wampum and peace treaties.

"That small island ahead has a good channel on each side," Podge told us. "Land on the lower point where there's enough willers to hide the boat. You can sleep your heads off without expecting bullet or arrer. I'll stand watch. Quain will either try to land to look it over, or pass it by. You're cap'n, you say. Good. You'll give the word whether we're to blow 'em out the canoe or let 'em hyper on down the river."

"We'll land. I'll give the word when they show up," I replied.

We dropped down to the lower end of the island and dragged the dugout under an excellent cover of overhanging willows. With a final warning to Old Podge to arouse us at the first sight of Quain, Durgin and I threw ourselves down and slept. I came to my feet before fully awake as two rifles exploded close by. Neither Podge nor Durgin were to be seen. But the former's triumphant cry, "Give 'em ——, you —— Yankee!" sent me running to the head of the island, minus my rifle which had been appropriated. I burst through a fringe of bushes and into a tiny opening with a ground-growth of clover and pea-vines. My two companions were tamping home bullets and peering eagerly up the river.

PODGE reloaded first and then threw up his rifle and fired. As I plunged forward Durgin discharged my rifle. Snatching the gun from him and reloading, I found an opening through the willows and saw Quain's boat putting back behind a bend. Five men were paddling furiously, while the sixth was slumped forward and was trailing his arm over the side. By the time the rifles were reloaded the dugout had disappeared.

"Why did you fire? Why didn't you wake me up?" I angrily demanded.

"With only the two guns there didn't seem to be any use for both of us to lose

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our sleep," explained Durgin. "And I was the first that Mister Podge happened to tunk with his foot. I knew you wouldn't relish to have them ahead of us, ready to meet us when they turned back, so I sort of decided to let you have your sleep out. And we got one of 'em. Sure it was that Quain."

"You was sleeping mighty sound and sweet, Mister Watson," added Old Podge. "Seemed a shame to give you a kick. Durgin proved to be a master hand with your rifle. It was him that bored a man at the first fire. Dugout was just gitting clear of the point. I'm mortal sure he got Quain. Now they know we ain't to be crowded; and now they've lost their leader, they'll keep off."

They had done what I would have done; probably all I could have done. Yet I was deeply chagrined that they had taken the matter into their own hands. Had I been in charge of the affair I should have waited until the dugout was well clear of the point. Then I should have pointed out Quain and had Podge use him for a target. Not having seen the man before his head was buried from view I could not swear it was Quain who had caught Durgin's lead; and I could not report him dead at headquarters while there remained the possibility of a doubt. I reminded them I was the leader and must be obeyed.

Old Podge with mock-humility defended himself:

"You said you was cap'n on board the dugout, but nary a word about being boss on this island. Anyway it's no good to talk about something that's ended."

That was what troubled me: I could not decide it was ended. Neither of my friends was positive that the man hit had a white beard; and so long as Quain had the run of the river and the trails to the Miami and Delaware villages the repulse of the dugout had ended nothing. I questioned them closely but could learn nothing definite about the dead man. They declared him to be Quain, but I was satisfied they had fired as soon as the dugout had rounded the point and was nearly head-on to their position and had not taken time to pick out Quain. We quit the subject, for talking about it profited nothing.

Entering the canoe, we dropped down a few miles to the mouth of the Big Hockhocking. We entered and landed. This time Durgin and I enjoyed a four-hours' sleep. When we awoke we found Old Podge had cooked some meat, and we lost no time in satisfying our hunger. No boats had passed, he said, except two flatboats. We made a dozen miles before selecting a spot for a night camp on a little creek. After we had eaten and were smoking our pipes Durgin, with his New England bluntness, asked of Podge:

"Neighbor, why didn't you go back to Pittsburg instead of coming back down the river?"

"I'd started for there when you took me off," explained the old man, shaking his head sadly. "But I'd lost my canoe. Mebbe it's just as well I'm back here again. Prob'ly I couldn't 'a' stood so many houses. And mebbe White Tom's been killed by this time."

Before the morning mist was clear of the river we were afloat again, and the three paddles, plus the current, permitted us to make better than forty miles a day with never a complaint from Durgin. We frequently passed boats filled with "movers"; invariable they asked for the latest "Injun news" and seemed to be living under a cloud of fear. And almost as surely did they ask concerning the whereabouts of Simon Girty.

My brief talks with these flatboat people confirmed the opinion I had formed while hurrying from Maryland to the Ohio—that east of the mountains Simon Girty's influence over the Indians was greatly magnified and his name more dreaded than it was west of the mountains. Since the battle of Blue Licks he had been reported to be the commander-in-chief of all the Indian forces, whereas he was never a leader even of the Upper Sandusky Wyandots, whom he went to live with at the command of the Detroit commandant, De Peyster. It was useless to tell the truth to the immigrants, for they would grow suspicious did one endeavor to convince them that Simon was not adopted by the Wyandots and had not married into the tribe, but was always under the supervision of the British Indian department when he left Detroit to visit any of the tribes.

One boat became so suspicious of Old Podge when he tried to enlighten them that guns were brandished and we were warned to keep clear, it being intimated that we were the three Girty brothers, James,

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George and Simon. To tell them that Simon was a prosperous farmer near Amherstburg, Canada, when not doing the errands of the British Indian agent, that he was less enamored of Indian life than his brother James, who in turn was less closely affiliated with the red man than George Girty, would have been received with hoots of derision and hearty curses. Simon was evil enough, but to believe him to be present almost simultaneously at various points wherever a white man was seen or his voice heard among a band of Indians, was the silliest nonsense.

Old Podge hated the Girtys and was frank to say so, yet he was peevish when the movers derided his truthful statements.

"I used to know them," he said, "back at Chambers Mills on the east side of the Susquehanna above Harris.* The three of them was interpreters for traders, and I always believed George cheated me when I took a trade to the Delawares, who had him a prisoner when he was a youngster."

One afternoon we met a hunter in a birch canoe. He was making hard work of ascending against the current, but he feared to seek easier water along either shore. He was carrying evil news (entirely false as we soon learned). He declared a large detachment of Wayne's army had been destroyed on the Bloody Road, as St. Clair's road was called by both red and whites. This intelligence increased my impatience to reach Cincinnati. I told my companions the fellow's talk could not be true, and yet it was the word the settlers of the upper country had prophesied they would receive.

Podge was downcast. Fearing the worst, he took first thought of himself. I suspected he was regretting the fate that was sending him down the river, and that he was fearing lest the savages at any time might be crossing into Kentucky to add to their long list of atrocities in that land.

After leaving the hunter, we camped a few miles above the mouth of the Great Kanawha, where Lord Dunmore's army under Lewis had turned back the Northwest tribes in 1774. We could have made the river, but, insisted Podge, if the hunter's news were true that stream might be swarming with the Shawnees and their allies bent on raiding the outlying Virginia settlements.

On the morrow, keeping to mid-channel, we passed the Kanawha and Point Pleasant. We saw no signs of Indians and at Gallipolis met one of Wayne's quartermasters traveling to Pittsburg on the army's business. He refuted the hunter's wild news. At Gallipolis were a few half-starved French settlers, utterly unfitted for wilderness life, yet still lingering about their squalid homes. The rest had long since scattered up and down the river.

The effect of the mischievous tidings spread by the hunter became more apparent as we continued our journey. We saw several families coming off Raccoon and Indian Creeks, all making for the Kentucky shore. It was useless to repeat to them the quartermaster's assurance. One family was in such haste that, lacking a canoe, it was laboriously crossing the river on a raft of logs tied together with grape-vines. We encountered them, a man and woman and four little children, some distance from the shore; they complained bitterly of being set too far down-stream by the current. By means of the rope in our dugout we gave them a tow and made a night camp with them on the Kentucky side.

Our landing was a few miles above the mouth of the Big Sandy. The woman seldom dropped the ax which she had clung to since leaving the cabin. She insisted on cooking the kettle and making some coarse bread, which she baked in an open dish over the coals. How she managed to do this work with the four children clinging to her linsey-woolsey skirt and with the ax clutched in her hand I could not understand. She seldom spoke and then only to hush the children who were clamorous for food and continually seeing red men behind the trees.

At each juvenile alarm the man would openly give way to fear. His wife's tightly pressed lips and wide staring eyes told us she would be much more dangerous to a war-party than her spineless husband. He too kept close to her and repeatedly asked:

"S'pose they'll come? S'pose they'll fetch up with us?"

When we told them there were no Indians nearer than the Maumee our words fell on deaf ears. When we emphatically told the man he had run away from his imagination he would stare at us blankly, then ask:

"S'pose they'll fetch up with us?"

Old Podge angrily informed him he was a "dumb fool." Sometimes the woman could still his babbling by saying:

*Harrisburg.

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"Lor's sake, John! Do keep shet. If the Injuns don't git our cow the poor critter'll turn wild. We've lost her. You would come down to this awful country, you know."

" 'Tain't fair," he would mutter. "They told me the honey-bees was thicker'n spatter, and all a man had to do was to dig a canoe and fill it with honey and swap it at the nighest settlement for salt and whisky. 'Tain't fair. Something oughter be done about it."

Then after ten minutes of silence he would joggle my arm and hoarsely whisper:

"Say, Mister; s'pose they'll fetch up with us?"

And this kept up until Old Podge could stand it no longer and left the camp and was gone so long I feared some evil had befallen him. When he returned he brought the hind-quarters of a deer, which he gave to the woman, saying:

"Ma'am, you seem to be the head of this family. Your man lacks spunk."

"His pap was killed by the Injuns," she explained in a colorless voice. "He was after the two cows and come home to find his pap sculped front of what was left of the cabin. His mother was took along into the wilderness. He never heard of her again. It fetches him this way. Allow we're as the Lawd made us. I lost my pap and mammy when I was only knee-high. Killed and sculped. Up on the Greenbriar. They carried off my two brothers. Prob'ly they're alive and living like Injuns now. When the Injuns come to git us I hope the boys won't be a-leading 'em."

I was accustomed to the matter-of-fact recital of such tragedies; but Durgin was hearing it for the first time, and his light-blue eyes became abnormally prominent. Later that night he whispered to me:

"She talks about it like some one had stolen a pig."

"Either that or go crazy," I told him. "It's all the life she knows. It began when she was very young. She probably never knew a family that hadn't lost one or more members in Indian raids. Many are as she is. It doesn't mean they don't feel it inside."

He brooded over my words for a bit and then fiercely demanded: "But after going through that —— why'n tophet do they come down here where the Injuns can kill or capture their own children?"

I gave it up. Why had my father forgotten the deaths of his three brothers when Braddock was killed and had wished to move my mother and me out on the Monongahela?

I was much relieved when our charges announced they had planned to follow the river-trail to the Big Sandy, turn inland there and follow the stream until they reached Vancouver's or Harman's stations. At either place they were confident they would find some Greenbriar friends. Or they might—they were wofully undecided—take the new short road to Virginia from Vancouver's and go back over the mountains. But did they do this I was confident they would be returning to the Indian Shore inside of three months. When we left them next morning, and while the woman was busily cooking the deer-meat for the journey, the man followed us to the dugout, with much secrecy drew me aside and whispered:

"Tell me honest, Mister. S'pose they'll fetch up with us?"

I note this incident as it is one of the exceptions. Invariably the man was the head of the family. And the red men did not fear white supremacy until the land-seekers took their women and children along with them into the hostile country.

WE PASSED the Little Sandy and added fifteen miles more to Tygert's; where we began our crossing to the Indian Shore and fell down four miles to the mouth of the Scioto. The Ohio at that point is nearly five hundred yards wide. We camped under a sycamore whose girth, as I paced it off, measured thirty-seven feet. And what savage sights that old sycamore must have witnessed!

In all the Western country there was no watercourse so pregnant with dangers to the early settlers as the Scioto. It was in the Chillicothe towns up the valley that Pontiac's conspiracy was planned. It was from these towns that the many raids against the Kentucky and the Western Virginia settlements had their inception. Down the Scioto came the Shawnees, who worked the most of the mischiefs suffered by Kentucky. It was from their Scioto towns that Mrs. Ingles and Mrs. Dennis escaped during the old French war and during the Pontiac war respectively.

For forty years this wandering, war-like

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people were implacably hostile, first to the English and later to the Americans. They constituted the chief stumbling-block to Western migration and expansion. It was they who kept the Ohio sealed against the whites for many years. To speak of the Indian Shore was to call to mind the Shawnees.

It was in their towns that Alexander McKee, Matthew Elliott, Simon Girty and two others of lesser consequence stopped when McKee broke his parole in his home at McKee's Rock and with Elliott induced Girty to flee to Detroit and take pot-luck with the British, who were wrongfully holding posts on American soil. And they found there James Girty, thrifty trader and long possessing a monopoly of the Ohio tribes' trade, and induced him to forego his country, remain with the Shawnees and carry out the orders of McKee after he became an "Indian Officer," as the British Indian agent was commonly called.

Our camp was close to the site of the old Shawnee village of Lowertown. Just above us and on the upper side of the Scioto was their second village of that name, built after the first had been washed away by high water. From Sandusky, the home of one division of Wyandots, ran the Scioto trail to the Ohio, crossing the river south of Tygert's creek and becoming the Warriors' Path and extending far south into the Cherokee and Creek countries.

Along this path had traveled such famous Shawnee men as Catahecassa (Black Hoof), remembered for his fearlessness at Braddock's defeat, for his prominence in the Point Pleasant battle, and more recently for his valor at Harmar's and St. Clair's defeats; he was now making ready to resist Wayne's new army: Black Fish, always to be identified with the terrible raids into Kentucky and with the capture of Daniel Boone: Cornstalk, leader of the Indian forces at Point Pleasant, when he accomplished the almost incredible task of holding the tribes to the mark throughout a pitched battle that lasted for a day: Blue Jacket, a host in himself when Harmar and St. Clair were beaten, and now, according to what we spies had learned, about to supplant the great Miami warrior, Little Turtle, in opposing Wayne's advance: Tecumseh, whose scouts kept the confederated tribes accurately informed of St. Clair's advance, whose greatness was to be fully revealed nearly a score of years after that day we camped under the giant sycamore, and who would never forget that his father was killed by the whites in the decisive battle at the mouth of the Great Kanawha.

And these were but a few of the fearless Shawnee men whom my father and I had fought; and knowing them, as I did, to have caused more misery among the pioneers of the Ohio valley than any other tribe, I was impatient to get away from the stream that watered the fair yet sinister valley.

From Maryland to the Great Miami I have slept on the sites of their ancient villages. Men of other tribes have been just Indians to me, but a Shawnee man ever was a ferocious killing-machine in my thoughts. I was convinced there were no Shawnees down the river and that they had left their Upper Scioto villages to join with the Miami, the Delawares and the Wyandots on the Maumee and its tributaries. And yet I was as unreasonably nervous as was Old Podge once he had entered a white settlement and began imagining that White Tom was lurking about, waiting to take his hair.

Picking up my rifle I told my friends I would perch a turkey. Durgin was trying to make Old Podge understand a new device for propelling boats, consisting of a crank and a wheel of paddles on each side; and neither offered to go with me. I walked up the west bank of the Scioto a short distance and felt the spirit of the place heavy upon me. As I stood on the bank and stared up its forest-lined shores I could almost fancy I beheld the painted face of a warrior peering at me from the mouth of a leafy tunnel and that behind him crouched a long line of our inexorable foes.

I shook off the unwholesome mood and set about securing my turkey. This was quickly done once I came upon a small flock, for all I had to do was to run about and swing a stick to drive them into trees. I could have slaughtered a number of the stupid creatures with my club, but contented myself with knocking over one. Slinging him over my shoulder, I started for the camp, only to halt, my hair seeming to stir uneasily, as I found myself face to face with a warrior.

He was naked except for his loin-cloth and was carrying a musket in one hand and an ax in the other. My right hand was holding the turkey by the feet. Before it would be

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possible for me to drop my burden and grapple with him he could split me to the chin. We stared at each other in the lessening light for what seemed to be a long time. He was fully as tall as I, and on his chest were several scars of old wounds which the paint did not cover.

He spoke first. My heart resumed its normal beat as I caught several words I knew to be Chickasaw, for that language was used for trade purposes among various tribes extending from the mouth of the Mississippi beyond the mouth of the Ohio. Then I observed the yellow ribbon in his scalp-lock and felt entirely relieved. I addressed him in the Shawnee tongue, saying:

"You are a Chickasaw warrior."

"Black Snake* sees through the eyes of the Night Walker," he gravely told me.

On his deep chest was the crude drawing of what I took to be a cat's head. I ventured to interpret it by saying:

"The Night Walker moves as soft as the panther. By his paint he is of the Panther clan."

This pleased him and he replied, "The white man has the eyes of the *koinchush*†. The Night Walker has run along the path from the Muskingum to the Scioto and down to this place. He is hungry."

"He shall be fed. His food is on my shoulder. Follow. Two white men are waiting by my fire."

The long brown barrel of a rifle slithered through the bushes until the muzzle in passing close to my left arm almost touched the naked breast. In a shrill, screaming voice Old Podge began:

"I've got him lined——"

I knocked the rifle to one side before he could finish. I heard the hammer fall, but the flint failed to ignite the powder. Instantly the Chickasaw's hand flew up, and the ax would have been sent spinning into the bushes had I not dropped my rifle to seize his elbow, while I cried:

"A foolish old man saw a Shawnee in the Night Walker. He is now hanging his head like a boy who does not know how to act when meeting a panther."

In English I hurled a hearty curse at Podge and warned him:

"No more tricks. Are you crazy? Can't you see this man wears the yellow ribbon of Wayne's Indian scouts?"‡

Old Podge stepped into view and extended his right hand to the Indian. Night Walker held his tense pose for a few seconds; then dropped his ax and took Podge by the hand. Podge explained:

"The light is bad. I heard you talking in Shawnee. I thought you were about to kill my white brother."

"My war medicine is very strong. It says it is not time for the Night Walker to die. Let us go where there is meat to eat," replied the Chickasaw; and with me in the lead we filed back to our camp and sent Durgin leaping behind a tree.

I dispelled the New Englander's fear, and he came forth. The Night Walker eyed him contemptuously and asked me:

"Is this man to be a Long Knife and fight for the Black Snake? The Shawnees and the Miamis will laugh when they see him coming to fight them."

"He is a very brave man. If he saw a Miami, Shawnee or Delaware he would not hide. But the Night Walker is not to be looked at unless it is known he brings white wampum. I will tell the white man the Panther man is a friend."

No matter how astute and cunning an Indian may be I have yet to meet one who would not believe me when I declared him to be the greatest and bravest of his race. The Chickasaw was pleased with my fair speech. Then I explained the situation to Durgin, nor was my language stilted as I took him to task for making us appear foolish in the eyes of a naked red scout. I mistrusted that the scout was regarding the three of us as being poor hands at woodcraft: this because of the ease with which he had taken me unawares, Old Podge's ill-advised attempt to slay and the worse offense of having his gun misfire, and the New Englander's display of cowardice.

However, we had what he wanted and he ate the most of the turkey. When he regretfully rubbed his stomach and decided he could eat no more I produced tobacco, filled and lighted his pipe and then lighted my own. While he smoked I explained for Durgin's benefit that the Chickasaw nation was the unrelenting foe of the French but as friendly to Americans as they had been

*Wayne's Shawnee name.
†Wildcat.

‡Wayne's few Chickasaw and Choctaw scouts were thus to be identified by the American soldiers.

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to the English. I added that they were a very turbulent, war-loving people and always at odds with some of the Southern tribes.

When I had finished, our guest removed his pipe and gravely informed me:

"The Night Walker was with the foolish man Sinkla*. His Long Knives died without making a fight. The Night Walker took many Shawnee and Delaware scalps that day."

And he held up his fingers for a count of eleven.†

"St. Clair's soldiers were men who came from the East and who never had fought Indians," I said in defense. "The Black Snake will take a different fight to the Maumee. Where does my brother go from here? He is far from the big camp."

"He goes down the river to the Long Knives. He tried to get through from the head of the Scioto and enter the Bloody Road. But too many strange Indians were between the river and the road, and the Night Walker had no road-belts but this."

He tapped his ax and I softly clapped my hands twice to show I appreciated his irony.

"We have a big canoe. We shall go fast. The Night Walker can go with us," I said.

"It is good. He will sleep now—the first time in three days. When he opens his eyes to the sun he will know what he will do."

But I had no doubt as to his decision. Before sunrise he was up and eating, ready to accompany us. And so it resulted that I, Peter Watson, having started out alone to find the army was now accompanied by a New England man holding many quaint notions, a veteran borderer who was afraid of only one red man, and a Chickasaw scout who had killed and scalped eleven of the enemy while St. Clair's army was being slaughtered like sheep.

The Night Walker kept in the stern as we floated down the river, his fierce eyes seeking a menace on every point. We camped at pleasure and made a brave smoke when we cooked the kettle. The Indian scouted the woods at each landing while Podge and I took turns hunting. Durgin soon aroused the Indian's interest; I could see the red man was puzzled. Durgin had tricks with a clasp-knife and a piece of soft wood that appealed to the Chickasaw as being closely related to magic. A small dart, quickly fashioned and sent on its mysterious flight into the twilight of one camp, especially impressed the Indian.

Durgin in turn was startled by the Chickasaw after we had landed at Brush Creek, opposite the uppermost of three islands lying ten miles above Limestone. The Indian had gone inland on a scout, and it was past our retiring hour when he returned. As he stepped up to the fire he threw down on the ground a green scalp and without a word made a hoop of willow and proceeded to stretch it so that he might hang it in the smoke. Old Podge grinned and simply remarked, "Good hunting!"

Durgin found his voice and cried, "Oh, Lawd! Hair of a human!"

And he stared in horror at the gruesome trophy.

Neither I nor Podge asked the Chickasaw any questions. When he was ready to talk he would tell us his adventure. We smoked and watched him. At last he finished arranging the scalp in the smoke and ate some meat, smoked a few puffs and made ready for his blanket. Then he said:

"He was a very brave man. He fought hard. The Shawnees are all brave men."

"A small band?" murmured Podge.

The Chickasaw stared into the fire for two minutes, then replied, "A small band. This man," and he nodded toward the scalp, "held back to see if it was followed."

This was the first incident since leaving Marietta that made us certain some of the Northern tribes were sending scouts as far south as the Ohio. If one band were out then others might be close at hand. We passed Limestone without landing, still keeping to the Indian Shore. With much expedition we at last passed the Little Miami and came to Cincinnati opposite the mouth of Licking creek.

JOHN FILSON, school-teacher, then surveyor and map-maker, named the town Losantiville, the weird conglomeration being interpreted as "the town opposite the Licking." Then he went surveying in the interior and was killed by Indians, and St. Clair renamed the settlement "Cincinnati" because of his admiration of the Society of the Cincinnati,

*St. Clair.
†One of St. Clair's red scouts is credited with eleven scalps.

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of which he like President Washington was a member. Across the river the Licking poured down from the Kentucky mountains. The hazardous situation of the town prior to the coming of Wayne's army may be better understood, perhaps, when it is remembered that the area between the Little and Great Miamis was commonly known as "the Slaughter Pen."

Fort Washington, a hundred and eight feet square with a two-story blockhouse at each corner and inclosing fifteen acres, protected the town from direct assault. It was located on the river above the town, and its erection spelled the commercial doom of Symmes City at North Bend.

General Wayne arrived at Cincinnati on May fifth and made his camp at the lower end of the town. As the high water prevented the army from crossing the river at any other spot it resulted that the facetious name of "Hobson's Choice" was given the camp.

We were gazing on a scene of great activity. Army supplies were being hauled to the camp; soldiers on leave were filling the town with song and brawling and crowding those resorts where liquor was to be had. Merchants and contractors were striving to do too many things at one time. Our Chickasaw soon found several other red scouts, each with a yellow ribbon in his scalp-lock, and held a brief talk with them. On rejoining us he told me in Shawnee:

"Some one, a white man, must be killed very near here."

His statement was too enigmatical to warrant even a guess, and Indian etiquette forbade any pressing inquiry. So I waited, wondering what he could mean. After a moody silence he continued:

"A Long Knife has been killed and scalped a short walk up the river. Evil birds whisper in white ears that the Black Snake's red warriors did it. They say no red man from the Maumee* could come close enough to the Long Knives and the village to do it."

"And the Long Knife was killed by a white man, a British Indian," I remarked as if agreeing with him and not asking a question.

"The Black Snake's red warriors do not kill the Black Snake's men. No Indian from the Maumee is down here to kill them. A white man did it. A white man whose heart is red. He comes and goes and to white men he looks like a white man. They do not see his red heart. They do not know he comes from a Delaware, Wyandot, Miami, or Shawnee village. He finds a Long Knife alone and takes him by the hand and calls him brother. Then he sticks an ax into his head so The Night Walker or one of his red brothers will be pointed out as the killer. That white man must be found and killed."

He would say no more and soon stalked away. And I noticed the Indians were keeping well together and that the carousing soldiers were eying them askance while some shouted threats at them. Old Podge, who had listened to the Chickasaw's talk, tugged at my fringed sleeve and in a tremulous voice whispered:

"It's White Tom, the Delaware, I'll bet a piece of journey-cake! He's waiting to git me. Tries to kill every white man he can catch alone outside the camp. Hoping each one is me. He's working alone and must be mighty sly."

There was no mistaking Podge's frame of mind. He was so badly upset I could not work him out of his black mood. It was curious to watch the change in the man. On a scout or in a pitched fight one could not ask for a better companion. But now, although he was back in a well-protected town, his imagination was at work, and behind every bush and tree on the outskirts of the settlement he was seeing the father of the young warrior he had killed at Big Bottoms on the upper Muskingum.

Could he have actually seen the revengeful Delaware he gladly would have given him battle; for it was not the reality he feared. Reason must have told him that his fears of a lurking foe were groundless ninety-nine times out of a hundred, and that it was foolish to believe the Delaware could be lurking outside every settlement he happened to visit. Perhaps he conceded his fears to be baseless in all that had gone before, and then told himself that this was the time when the invisible enemy was close at his heels. But it was a waste of time to reason with him.

Hate-Evil Durgin did not approve of the settlement.

"Too much clutter," he complained as he watched the confusion caused by the influx of soldiers, the efforts of profane teamsters

*Miami-of-the-Lakes was the old style name for the Maumee.

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trying to secure their loads and get them back to camp, the activity of newcomers in building shelters and the general running back and forth of merchants fattening on the patronage of the army.

"Can't ever find a quiet place to work in down here," he glumly continued. "Almost been better off if I'd stuck to Marietty."

"The packet-boats will be running soon—some say before the year is out.* You can go back in one of them. They'll be bullet proof," I told him.

"I dunno," he muttered. "Maybe I will—maybe I won't. Quite a long time to wait—and if I go back they'll say I'm licked and they'll vote me down more'n ever. Every time I open my mouth they'd vote against me."

I suggested he could avoid all hostility by refraining from taking part in any of the town's affairs. Such a course appealed to him as being unthinkable. He stared at me in amazement and spluttered:

"Ain't I free man? Ain't I got a right to air my idees and vote? Or be I a knot on a log? Guess I'll try the army for a while. Maybe Gineral Wayne'll be keen to try out the new gun my mind's working on. Guess I'll eat."

Old Podge suddenly discovered that despite his fears he too was hungry. I could not go with them, for I had business to attend to before reporting at headquarters. My clothes were stained and torn. I was disheveled and ruffianly in appearance. Had St. Clair or any other of Washington's brigadiers been in command of the army I should have given my personal appearance scarcely a thought. And it may be hard for those of later generations to understand why General Wayne should have set such a store by dress, and why he should always have insisted on neatness—elegance when possible. But we who knew him and served under him easily understood why he was called "Dandy" Wayne long before he came to be known as "Mad Anthony."

Although always fastidious in dress he based his love of finery not on vanity alone. He was frank to write General Washington when it was difficult to cover a soldier's nakedness and frankly avow his "insuperable bias in favor of an elegant uniform and soldierly appearance." He was thoroughly sincere when on the same occasion he declared he would rather risk his life and military reputation at the head of men properly clothed and inadequately armed, than to lead them as they "appear in common" with sixty rounds of ammunition. And General Washington was prompt and frank to reply, "I agree with you perfectly as to the importance of dress."

So he was called "Dandy" Wayne, and he lived up to the name by ordering his men to be fresh shaved and well-powdered just before making the night assault on Stony Point. Those who only think of the general as a gallant figure given to foppery may write him down as being actuated by affectation and accomplishing bold acts because of vanity and pride rather than because of ingrained courage.

I would remind any who may have taken this narrow view of the greatest drill-master of the Revolution of that momentous council of war in June, Seventy-eight, when Sir Henry Clinton was marching his army from Philadelphia into the Jerseys, when Washington asked sixteen of his generals whether or not the army should fight a general engagement. Some have said Baron Steuben favored the risk; I do not know. Other foreigners, placing small dependence on the ragged army, strongly opposed it. When General Wayne was called upon to give his views he made the greatest speech spoken in any council of the war. Incidentally it was the briefest and consisted of the two words, "Fight, Sir!" And Washington was of his mind. The battle of Monmouth would have ended the war if not for the poltroonery of General Charles Lee.

I mention these things to show how a man may take pride in his personal presentability, how he may believe a soldier can fight and die more bravely if well-clothed, how he may believe a scare-crow appearance wounds self-respect and smothers the finest spirit, and yet, despite all this, be a prince of soldiers. Such was Anthony Wayne, whom I did not care to meet in my ragged, dirty forest garb.

So it was I took time to drop into the general store of Samuel Creigh, of Pittsburg, and from his agent purchase a new hunting-shirt and long breeches that tucked into new moccasins. Then I bought a razor, scraped my lean face smooth and carefully combed and tied and powdered my long hair. The agent told me I made a brave

*Advertised for immediate service in Cincinnati *Centinel*, Jan. 11, 1794: Two armored boats, four weeks to Pittsburg and back with stops at river towns.

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appearance; I felt affable enough to give some credit to his courteous speech.

By the time I had finished and was stealing an extra minute for a slab of bread and some meat Durgin and Old Podge found me. They did not recognize me at first. Old Podge sniffed and snorted, but Durgin gravely assured me I was a "most proper-looking man."

While I was eating, the agent sounded the complaint now often heard up and down the river.

"Some of us, quite a few of us, feel that the army ought to get after the Indians at once. St. Clair started too late in the season. Some think General Wayne is making the same mistake."

"Too many traders are worrying about their profits and are too quick to criticize General Wayne," I told him.

He became busy with a shelf of goods and said no more on that head.

Old Podge, however, continued the subject along historical lines by saying: "Old Sin Clair! I was there. I seen him with his gray hair streaming from under his cocked-hat when he was routed out of his tent, a sick man. I was nigh him when he was trying to put some heart into his no-account army, with Butler dying. He never could 'a' whipped his men into shape for Injun fighting if he'd kept at 'em for ten years. Lawd! But wasn't that a bad morning. I never wake up early on a raw, November day that I don't think of it and see it—militia pouring in like sheep from their camp across the river and piling pell-mell into the head of the army.

"There was white men with the Injuns, but there wa'n't no British guns, as some folks have said. Injuns didn't need any big guns to lick us that day. They commenced slaughtering us half a hour before sunrise, and by half-past nine what was left of us was running away. Our guns wa'n't no use to us, as after the first rush not a cannoneer was left to work 'em. Guns didn't help Braddock neither. Wayne has 'em, but he won't git a chance to use 'em.* When you go out to fight Injuns you oughter leave the cannons and music to home.

"When I quit the fighting the Injuns was around Butler, who was dying outside his tent. A Shawnee prisoner afterwards told me that Butler begged Simon Girty to end his sufferings, but that Girty wouldn't use the ax and passed the job on to a warrior, who tomahawked Butler when told he was a big chief†. They divided Butler's scalp into as many pieces as there was tribes at the fighting."

The agent turned a worried gaze on him and asked, "Then you think this'll end like the other trys ended?"

"When you go out to fight Injuns be a Injun, or you'll be a dead white man," was the gloomy reply.

"Not by a jugful of the best cider ever made in Essex County!" spoke up Durgin. "We'll larrup —— out of them just as easy as my grandmother used to make a pie."

I believed the truth would be found between these two extremes of judgment.

My companions returned to the street while I spent a few minutes in rubbing my rifle. Durgin had had time to get into trouble by the time I reached the door. He stood in a circle of grinning soldiers. Old Podge must have disappeared before it started, or else he would have been in it up to his chin. From their caps bound with white and the white plumes in their black hair I identified the men as belonging to the First Sub-Legion.

They were baiting the New England man by calling him a —— Yankee and "wall eyes," while he in a quiet but none the less deadly manner was working himself into a rage. His deliberation in feeding his ire whimsically reminded me of a man winding up a tall clock; for he went at it as if it were a task which required a certain amount of time. A sergeant was taking the lead in the baiting and was mistaking Durgin's silence for timidity.

As I was seeking the best method of ending the situation Durgin gravely told the sergeant, "Young man, you take off that hat and put down your mortal weapons and you 'n' me will settle this argument."

"Dew tell!" whined a half-drunken private in an inimitable nasal tone.

The onlookers roared with merriment.

"You fellers grinning like you was born foolish can take a vote on the result," quietly continued Durgin.

The sergeant, red of face from drink and the hot weather, swore a big oath and quickly stripped to the waist. The affair had progressed too far for me to interfere. As long as they fought with their hands

*A fact.

†Quoted in Butterfield's "History of the Girtys."

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neither was likely to be killed, although the rough-and-tumble border fights often were more gruesome than a duel with knives. I could not, however, let the New England man go unwarned of our backwoods style, and I called out to him:

"Look out for your eyes, Durgin. He may fight different from what they do up North. I'll see no one tries any tricks"

And I slid the rifle barrel across my left arm.

Without turning his head Durgin mumbled: "That's what I got eyes for—to look after Hate Durgin's interests. But it's neighborly of you to tell me."

The soldiers cast me a searching glance, and the sergeant stared at me belligerently. There was a glint of recognition in his eyes; I was recalling him but for the moment could not remember his name.

"Best tend to your knitting, Peter Watson," he warned.

"You have no words for me now, or after this wring is finished," I told him.

He did not answer, but his face lost much of its boisterous expression and became crafty and savage. Knowing I was friendly to Durgin he was all the more bent on doing him bodily injury. I feared my warning had made the matter worse for the Massachusetts man. Durgin was composed enough. He took his time in removing his decent coat and was fussy in folding it and finding a clean place on the log doorstep to place it. With like deliberation he removed his hat and cravat and proceeded to roll up his shirtsleeves. The last task took time, for he was very patient in adjusting them to his liking.

When we Southerners went into a wring we usually threw off our garments with a hurrah-boys abandon, and Durgin's solicitude for his property was interpreted by some as betraying a miserly spirit. It won for him several derisive remarks, the trend being that after the fight was over he would have but small concern for the condition of his clothing. But property would always be property to Hate Durgin, something hard come-by and to be treated with great respect.

The spectators fell back and widened the ring. While Durgin was still working on a sleeve the sergeant leaped forward, with a quick movement secured a grip and tore the sleeve off at the shoulder. I believe this act sent Durgin's anger to a higher pitch than a blow in the face would have done. For half a minute he glared at his adversary, who was waving the sleeve like a captured flag. The delight of the men was immense. Then the New Englander went into action.

I had passed through the Northern country more than once, and being a man of peace had had no quarreling; nor had I seen the New England natives in the act of settling difference by violence. In truth my impression was they were given to taking their disputes before a magistrate instead of resorting to personal combat. Old age finds me endorsing this rather tame practise, but I viewed it differently when Mad Anthony Wayne was known to be "every kind of a fighting man there was."

Whatever feelings of contempt I may have entertained regarding the North's respect for hearings before a magistrate I was now filled with admiration for Durgin's dashing technique. When I had time to review the fight I could find something of General Wayne's tactics in giving battle; for the general always held, and so taught his soldiers, that the attack is the best form of defense.

So violent and precipitate was Durgin's onslaught that the sergeant had no time to maneuver and essay any of his beastly tricks. The New Englander shot through the air like a Canadian wild-cat, and the two were clinched and rolling over and over and had smashed through the line before the spectators could get out of the way. When their revolutions stopped and the dust had settled they were against the stump of a tree, and Durgin was astride of his opponent, his bony fingers gripping the long black hair on each side, and he was methodically bumping the fellow's head on the ground.

"All in favor of Hate-Evil Durgin say, 'Aye,'" he roared and once more slammed the sergeant's head against the ground.

"Aye!" gasped the sergeant faintly. "In God's great mercy, aye, sir."

"The 'ayes' have it," announced Durgin, springing to his feet. "Shall we vote on anything else?"

THE soldiers suddenly began falling away from the store and seemed to be striving to efface themselves. The sergeant secured his clothing and made desperate haste to cover his nakedness.

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Durgin remained unperturbed. Then I saw the general, his thin, alert face under the plain cocked-hat expressing disgust at the scene he must have witnessed. I wished myself back in the store but feared my presence already had been noted.

General Wayne was above average height and presented a strikingly handsome figure. The wavy hair, dark when not powdered, softened the stern set of his features. The deep, hazel eyes usually so kindly were now glowing as he beheld the soldiers scurrying away like men caught in mischief. As was his wont the general was immaculately dressed.

With him was Brigadier-General Thomas Posey, of the Third Sub-Legion, one of the battalion-commanders at Stony Point. Behind Posey and endeavoring to conceal his amusement was my old friend, Ensign Campbell Smith, Posey's aide-de-camp. Captain Henry De Butts, Wayne's aide-de-camp, came hurrying up.

Had General Posey been alone I should have hastened to greet him and felt no embarrassment; for despite his arduous work in the Revolution and his activities in the Indian campaigns, he remained a very human, lovable man without any autocratic habits of mind. He was what Durgin would have styled a "neighborly man." By this I would not have it understood that General Wayne was in the slightest degree a cold, austere figure, unapproachable and lacking in sympathy. God knows how he labored to provide clothing for his men when he served under Washington and how he emptied his own purse repeatedly to supply shoes and hats. And at the same time concerts and dinners and assemblies were being enjoyed in Philadelphia at a cost of two or three hundred pounds for each entertainment.

But while the general's spirit was noble and his sense of justice most pronounced and often tempered with mercy there had been too many bloody defeats at the hands of the Indians and too many hysterical pieces of advice being showered upon him by Secretary of War Knox for him to permit slackness among the troops. He fully understood the risk he ran of being tumbled down under the red wo which had overwhelmed his predecessors.

Wayne's historical renown seems to be based on his dashing manner of leading a small force successfully against a much larger force and winning with the odds vastly against him. His nickname will perpetuate that fallacy among many generations to come. Whereas, as a matter of truth, the keynote of his many successes is his infinite patience in preparing for an attack by working out each detail.

He knew, as none knew better, that he was whipped or victorious before he met the Indians; that the result of the coming campaign was being formed daily by the preparations he was making at Hobson's Choice. And he did not need to be told by Secretary Knox that did he fail the very existence of the republic would hang uneasy in the balance, that the country could scarcely survive a third set-back within a period of a few years, with Great Britain ready to take advantage of any internal disorders. The scene he had just observed, insignificant in itself, reminded him of the danger ever threatening his thorough plans for taking a "fighting" army into the wilderness.

He loved the profession of arms and had responded to his surroundings as a youth much as the illustrious Washington had when a boy at Hobby's school. Young Wayne's teachers in the Philadelphia Academy had despaired of him. At the age of ten he heard the survivors of Braddock's defeat tell of their blood-curdling adventures. Wayne senior had been a veteran Indian-fighter. The boy Wayne had seen the fugitives pouring into Philadelphia and had listened to their terrible experiences while the French and Indians were burning settlements within sixty miles of the city.

The terrible years of Fixty-six and Fifty-seven must have left a lasting impression on his mind, and although his star was bright at Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth and Stony Point, it must not be supposed he took command of the army down the Ohio as one versed only in the battles of the Revolution. He must have been keenly conscious of the resentment his appointment had aroused among other military leaders; and he had vowed he would justify the President's choice of him. Other armies had caroused and deserted until they were useless as fighting machines and had been whipped. The rough-and-tumble brawl in front of Creigh's store spelled defeat for the Legionary army if discipline could not prevent such spectacles.

To De Butts he said, "There has been too much of this beastly conduct. There shall

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be no more passes to this village except as issued by the field-officer of the day; and then not to more than one man in a company. You there, in uniform and the vanquished in this disgraceful situation. You will return with these others to camp and report yourself under arrest. You were a sergeant. We will find one more fit to take over your duties."

Badly frightened, for the "wire cats" were being applied with much frequency to bare backs in Hobson's Choice, the demoted man hurried away. Durgin, who had been staring wide-eyed at the elegant figure of the general, now remembered his disheveled condition, hurriedly fastened his cravat and drew on his coat. The general read him with one glance, and his eyes seemed to approve of the broadbacked coat and the Northern man's appearance of tidiness. He asked—

"How is it, sir, that you come down here to brawl with my soldiers?"

Quite at his ease, now that his coat was on his back, and already inclined to be argumentative, Durgin answered, "I came to join the army and had to fight before I could get my name down on the rolls. But I don't think your men are much at fighting, gineral—I'm guessing you're Gineral Wayne by the way t'others step around and hark when you speak."

General Posey turned his head, and the two aides-de-camp were painfully solemn and red of visage. Wayne's expression remained cold and inquiring except for a sudden twinkle in his deep-set eyes.

"We need men who are fighters," he told Durgin. "The camp is near and the rolls are open. You are from the North. Northern men are good fighters. Perhaps you came with a band of settlers. Perhaps there is a number of you would wish to join the army."

The general's voice was hopeful, for recruiting had been slow work.

"Nary a man from my neighborhood is down here except me. Back home lots of folks think it's better to give the Injuns beads instead of bullets. I'm guessing the best and quickest way is to give 'em —— and have done with it and save the beads for trade. Still I wouldn't 'a' been here if it hadn't been for one Peter Watson, who was most mortal keen to reach the army."

De Butts and Smith exchanged quick glances and looked at me. The general rubbed his chin with thumb and finger, then turned to De Butts and asked:

"Watson? That was the man who went North for us? He was a sergeant and very proficient as an armorer."

De Butts' eye flickered a signal for me to approach; before he could answer I left the doorway and stood before my commander. Then De Butts said—

"General, this is the man—Peter Watson."

The general stared at me closely for a moment; then his gaze lighted with recognition.

"Sergeant Watson, this fellow says you were in haste to reach the army," he sharply greeted me, yet allowing his gaze to travel up and down my new clothes.

"I was and am in great haste, sir."

He motioned De Butts and Smith to take Durgin one side and gestured for General Posey to remain.

"For one in haste and absent so long, sergeant, it is peculiar you should loiter in this place with headquarters so near," the general coldly told me.

"I will submit my report before retreat, sir. I have had to fight and run much of the way down the river and have been pursued by the renegade Quain and his men. I believe he frequently has visited this village under his river-name of Hatton."

"All the more need you should have lost no time in submitting your report."

"I have traveled far and fast, sir. My appearance was shocking. I should have felt humiliated to have entered camp looking as I did a short time ago. I have used only enough time to purchase clean garments before reporting at headquarters, sir."

"I see," he murmured, and again glancing with approval at my spick-and-span appearance. "Ahem. A soldierly appearance breeds self-respect, and possessing that it is impossible for a man to lack courage. We will accept you as having just arrived. But you have taken a roundabout course in getting here. We had given you up as dead."

Now his voice was all kindliness.

"The Bloody Road was closed. I came down through the woods of Vermont, sir."

To Posey he said, "You will see the report is brought to my attention immediately after retreat, and you will join me in examining it."

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To me he said, "I suspect the army is indebted to you for your efforts, sergeant. I am pleased to see you have brought us a sturdy recruit."

And he glanced at Durgin, whose oddities of speech were fair convulsing the aides-de-camp.

"Two recruits, if you please, sir," I amended as from the tail of my eye I saw Old Podge bearing down on us, his gait suggesting the flowing-cup without being painfully apparent. I gave his name and a bit of his history.

"He should do well as a spy. I shall be waiting for your report, sergeant."

And he swung on through the village to observe with his own eyes the intoxication of the men on leave. I secured Old Podge and together with Durgin repaired to the camp. Podge found a place to sleep off the effects of the liquor in the hut of an armorer. Durgin lost no time in being enrolled in the First sub-legion where he would have former Sergeant Ogden, the man he had whipped, as a fellow-private.

I set to work on my report, which fortunately I had written in the form of a journal as I went along and which needed only my experience with Quain to be complete. It was finished half an hour before retreat and delivered to Captain De Butts. With that important task off my mind I was free to look up old friends about the camp.

The men were well-hutted. It was characteristic of the general in making any permanent camp to have the huts for the soldiers erected before those for the officers were put up. Many of the men were finishing their work of drying out their cartridges by exposing them on blankets to the rays of the sun, or, if riflemen, by holding the powder-horns in the sunlight and turning and shaking the horns so that all the grains might get the benefit of the drying heat. I learned this was being done two or three times a week because many of the guns missed fire at maneuvers. From one hut came the sound of deep groaning and the taking on of some poor —— with a raw back. It was a vivid reminder of the Pittsburg days when desertion was discouraged by fifty or a hundred lashes with the wire cats.

I hunted up Captain Thomas Lewis of the riflemen, and he urged me to seek assignment in his company. This was to my liking, for I preferred the partial independence of the riflemen to the confinement of an armorer. However, that was something to wait on the morrow. Captain Lewis was deeply interested in my river experience, for he had had a slight acquaintance with Quain prior to Harmar's defeat.

Like the Girty brothers Quain was captured by the Indians when young. Unlike the Girtys, however, he had spent much of his life with them as a prisoner, whereas Simon Girty was a captive for three years only. Captain Lewis declared that Quain's heart and mind were red. He had returned to western Pennsylvania and had taken up land, but his long life of savage freedom quarreled with the drudgery and commonplaces of civilization, and his cabin-life had been short.

"He and Black Dorman make a fine pair," I remarked.

"Dorman is even worse than Quain or the Girtys," insisted the captain. "Dorman was captured only a few years ago, he and his wife. He deliberately chose the red life so he might pay off old scores against his former neighbors."

I had heard many stories about Dorman, a transported felon whose life in England had been filled with many crimes if one were to believe the scoundrel's own boastings. I recalled the Night Walker's statement about some of our soldiers being murdered up-river, one at a time. I suggested it might be some of Dorman's work.

"It would be like him," admitted the captain. "And it wouldn't be the first time he has killed in and near the settlements and the people have believed it to be the work of Indians. None of the Girtys are down here, and you left Quain up river. And we've lost half a dozen men within ten days. The men have been talking about the Chickasaw scouts being guilty, but I haven't believed it. If you join my company who knows but what you might find and bag the killer?"

"Get Old Podge into your company. He'll be a good man for you. I'll join it if it can be arranged."

While searching for Durgin I was overtaken by an ensign and ordered to report at General Wayne's headquarters at once. Standing by the sentinel outside the hut was Captain De Butts. He held me only long enough to inform me:

"They're satisfied with your report. They want to ask a few questions to see if

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you have overlooked any small items of information."

ENTERING the low room, I found myself in the presence of General Wayne, Brigadiers Posey and Post, and Lieutenant-Colonel John Hamtramck. The general began:

"It appears you have used your eyes and ears to advantage, Sergeant Watson."

I glowed with pride. I felt crestfallen as he continued:

"But you have mixed impressions with facts. Another time tell what you see and hear and we will draw our own conclusions."

He paused, glanced over my report and went on, "I note you say the Indians are well armed. Just what do you mean by that?"

"Alexander McKee, the British Indian agent, is distributing guns of the best quality. They are not the ordinary trade guns. The quantity of powder and bullets given to the different tribes seems to be unlimited."

"Substantiate your statement."

"Before I left Detroit last Fall and after all visiting delegations had received many guns and much powder there remained in the Crown stores nearly two thousand pounds of powder, as many gun flints, a hundred guns and as many tomahawks. These munitions were stored with a large quantity of Indian presents left over after the distribution. They were not for the garrison or Canadian militia. Thomas McKee, son of Alexander McKee, told me that much."

"Alexander McKee, the —— scoundrel, is the stimulator of all this trouble!" exclaimed Wayne.

For when at a certain pitch the general could express himself in very forceful language.

He calmly resumed, "How many well-armed Indians will be in the field this Fall?"

"I can only say that last Fall, according to statements of McKee and Matthew Elliott made in my hearing but not addressed to me, there were two thousand armed Indians. Before leaving Montreal it was commonly talked among officers of the militia in my hearing that more Indians would take the field this year than last."

Again he consulted the report, and said, "You say Little Turtle and other chiefs will visit Lord Dorchester in Montreal this Fall or Winter. Substantiate."

"My acquaintances among the officers of the Canadian militia told me their superiors know Little Turtle is afraid of the next big fight. McKee and Elliott, while I was traveling with them on Elliott's lake boat, regretted in my presence Little Turtle's speech to the Miamis in which he told them the Indians can not expect to win all the time.* It is planned to have Blue Jacket, the Shawnee, take Little Turtle's place as supreme leader if Little Turtle can't be influenced to change his views after visiting Canada. It is to restore the Miami chief's confidence that he is to be feasted in Montreal this Fall or Winter. Thomas McKee told me that."

"You submit no proof for your astounding statement that the British intend to invade American territory and build a fort on the Maumee. Have you any such proof?"

"As a deserter from the American army I talked with McKee and his son very freely and with some of the officers in the fort at Detroit. They openly discussed plans for building a fort at the foot of the Maumee rapids. A Captain Breen, acting for Colonel John Simcoe, in my presence on Elliott's boat talked with Elliott about transporting the supplies and munitions necessary to be taken to the Maumee when the fort was built."

"By ——, gentlemen! If England wants another war she is going about getting it in the right way. And we send commissioners and Quakers to talk peace terms with the tribes while McKee is stirring them up to exchange more war-wampum! If the time comes when I can take my twenty-five hundred 'commissioners' from this camp and march north the tribes and the British will soon find there isn't a Quaker among them."

In an instant he had regained his usual calm bearing and was tersely saying to me:

"You speak of Spanish emissaries from New Orleans being in Detroit and urging the Indians to fight the United States. What is your proof?"

"I saw three of them and talked with one. He was free to tell me what I have condensed in my report. They say they hope to divide the fur trade of the West between New Orleans and Montreal. They were amiably treated by the British officials."

*Little Turtle so advised. He had forebodings of defeat.

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Wayne smiled grimly and remarked, "And how they would be at each other's throats, each striving to secure all the fur-trade, should this country be denied her rightful privileges!"

With characteristic abruptness he became the cool, calculating strategist and ran hastily through my report. Then he announced:

"You have done well, sergeant. Dismissed."

I started for the door when General Posey spoke up and asked, "Would you be recognized if you went back there, sergeant?"

My heart was in my moccasins. For nearly a year I had been at Detroit and in Canada, and never a day of that time I did not fear some deserter would recognize me and denounce me. It was not the physical danger I was loathing, but the nervous strain of always playing a part, of indulging in loud mouthings against my country. A spy's work is most necessary, but a noose is the penalty if he be caught. This ignominious fate tends to degrade the calling in the estimation of many. I had no foolish prejudice against the employment, only a healthy disliking for always being on my guard.

I replied: "I wore a beard while up North. I do not believe I would be recognized if clean shaven unless some one who knows me here should see me up there. My voice might betray me, but I don't fear that."

General Wayne drummed his fingers softly on the table, then asked, "You would volunteer to go back if it were considered a military necessity?"

"Certainly, sir."

"You will never be commanded to go," he reminded; and added with one of his heart-warming smiles: "The intelligence you have brought me is very valuable. The army is indebted to you. I regret I can make no public acknowledgment so long as there is a possibility of your making a second trip."

"I am ready at any time, sir."

And my heart was heavy as I passed from the hut and walked to the outskirts of the camp to be alone while I thought it over.

TO BE CONTINUED

ANOMALIES OF INDIAN RULE

by **Frank H. Huston**

BEFORE all treaties with the civilized tribes of the "nations" of Indian Territory were abrogated and the redskins enfranchised and received allotments in severalty, each nation conducted its own government and was considered by the United States as sovereign in itself but as a subject nation.

This condition gave rise to a peculiar state of affairs as to some members of the difficult "nations."

The negro slaves held by the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations were made free by the treaties of 1856, but these treaties did not stipulate that the slaves should become members of the tribes, so their status was simply citizens of the United States, residing legally in Indian Territory.

Somewhat anomalous in view of the fact that their former masters were not considered as such; but the ex-slaves could not vote, sue in the Indian courts, sit on a jury in said courts, having no legal or other interest in either the courts or schools of the country in which they were born.

This was remedied in the 80's and 90's when all tribal Governments were abolished by Congress and the Indian became either a citizen or ward of the Government, to be finally exploited and robbed in either case.

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The Dugout Canoe

by JOHN SCARRY

Author of "A Touch of Fever" and "Partners"

CARTER halted, cursed vividly, then glanced at the blazing New Guinea sun. Scowling, he shoved back his battered *topee* and drew a hairy wrist over his forehead. On the path behind him Milroy came to a stop.

"Ready fer chow?"

Milroy nodded.

"This is as good a place as any. It's about noon, I should say."

So Carter swung his pack to the ground. The other man did likewise, choosing a shady spot about five yards away. He took good care never to turn his back completely on his companion; for the conviction was strong in him that Carter was planning treachery for the sake of the gold they were bringing to the coast.

The partnership between Milroy and Carter was not of long standing. Some seven months previously, as strangers, they had come together in Wimbi at the mouth of the Digool River.

At that time Chang Liong, the gum *damar* trader, was brimming over with fresh rumors of gold. Word had seeped down of yellow metal in the mountains near the Digool's headwaters. This information fired the white men's minds. They agreed to join forces for an expedition to the interior.

Milroy, the younger of the two, was well-known and well-liked in New Guinea; but Carter was comparatively a newcomer. Furthermore, he never had much to say for himself. It was understood that he had been some sort of warehouse assistant for an American exporting firm in Singapore.

There was an unprepossessing look about him. True, no single one of his features could be written down as evil; and yet, instinctively, one sensed the fact that the tropics had burned deep into his moral fiber.

Chang Liong, when he heard of the agreement, came secretly to Milroy with a warning. Carter, he declared, was untrustworthy, a man of doubtful reputation for such an enterprise. He suggested finding a different partner.

"One man," the Chinese related earnestly, "Tuan Richards his name, never came back from a trip with Tuan Carter. That was last year on the Mamberama, *tuan*. Believe me; I am not mistaken. They had ten thousand guilders in paradise birds between them. Many suspect——"

"Oh, you're an old scandal-monger, Chang," was Milroy's careless reply. "Besides, there's no one else in Wimbi. If I back out of this, I can't go at all—until next year, perhaps."

Milroy was eager and sure of himself. He laughed off the trader's advice. As

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soon as the monsoon shifted, he and Carter got under way in a dugout canoe.

The journey upstream consumed two weeks. It brought the prospectors through the coastal jungle and past a score of friendly villages. Most of the way their progress was quiet and uneventful. Denser jungles near the mountains, however, called for a certain degree of caution.

Here, in a dank unwholesome region, dwelt untamed Papuans, man-eaters. By day these savages were courageous and dangerous warriors. They commanded the river. But fortunately, the devil-devils that cluttered their untutored brains kept them close to their villages at night.

This made it easy to win through the hostile strip. A simple enough ruse sufficed. During two days Milroy and Carter hid in their canoe under wooded banks from sunrise to sunset; and twice they paddled safely by dim starlight.

"Far enough," said Milroy one morning before dawn. "We'll strike up this creek toward the north."

"What'll we do with the canoe?"

"Hide it in that mangrove swamp."

"There's crocodiles in there," Carter objected.

"Sure. That's just it. We'll take our chances, but no Papuan'll ever dare. When we come back, we'll find the old scow just where we left it. There's a *djatti*-tree that's been struck by lightning. We'll line it up with that."

The procedure was wise, meeting with Carter's approval. They hid their dugout carefully and plunged up the shallow creek on foot.

Soon the nature of the country changed. Jungles gave way to grass-grown low rolling hills, beyond which the mountains loomed purple and green and indigo in the distance. Four days' hiking took the partners to their destination in a valley of evergreen *chemaras*. And almost at once they found gold.

They found it in such abundance that panning proved too slow for their desires. A sluice gave far more satisfaction. Five months passed—five months of toil and phenomenal good fortune—and all the time Carter was an amiable if blasphemous companion. At last the moist winds of the west monsoon warned of approaching rain. The prospectors divided the gold between their two packs and started for the coast.

Whereupon, abruptly and for no apparent reason, Carter became surly. His coarse good nature dropped from him. More than once Milroy surprized expressions of utter malevolence on the other's face. This set him thinking, reminded him inevitably of Chang Liong's remarks.

There had been, he reviewed, no clashes between himself and Carter, no differences of any description. So Carter's sullenness had certainly originated within. What was it all about? Greed? Cupidity? Was his partner hypnotized by their possibility of considerable wealth?

"Close to fifty pounds between us," thought Milroy; "a good haul—if he has the nerve. Guess he has, though. Chang Liong put him down for a bad one. The dirty mucker!"

Naturally, once suspicious, Milroy was seized with hot anger. He was a resolute man, a man of action, not likely to take things lying down. Especially not such vileness as Carter seemed to be contemplating. Considering the situation, it occurred to him that the best defense was a swift offense. He must strike before the other struck.

But how?

He might disarm Carter by sudden assault. That would be easy. Could he, however, hope to maintain the upper hand all the way to the coast?

Probably not. They had too far to go, too much to withstand. One moment of relaxation, he realized, would upset his supremacy. No; disarming was not enough. Still his mind shrank from any thought of killing the man outright.

"I'm not positive," he argued against such a course. "It may be all my imagination. I'll wait. I'm safe, anyway, until we get to the dugout. Carter still needs me as a pack-horse; and he needs me in case the Papuans jump us. But I'm —— sure he'll not get away with anything—even if I have to plug him."

THUS confident, Milroy had tramped along day after day. Now a couple of hours would bring them to the Digool. There was no more than the vestige of a trail beside the creek they had first ascended. Where the prospectors stopped to eat, this trail swung away in a broad bend, skirting a patch of marshland. On one side lay the swamp; on the other the trees drew close to the path.

"—— hot," said Carter.

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"It sure is. I can feel the sweat sloshing around in my boots."

"Well, t'night ends the worst of it. Wonder if that dugout's all right?"

Milroy said nothing. He was busy procuring his ration of yams and cooked swineflesh from the top of his pack. Carter sat down, started eating. He reassured himself the while.

"I reckon it is," he said. "We hid it mighty good in them mangroves. —— filthy hole! Nothin'd ever go in there but crocs an' us. Canoe'll be full o' muck, though."

"We should worry," offered Milroy between mouthfuls.

"Yeh."

After that was a long silence, broken only as the two men went separately to the creek to drink. Half-reclining against the trunk of a tree, his sun-helmet on the ground and one elbow on his precious pack, Milroy regarded his partner with quiet attention.

Their eyes met as Carter came up from the stream. The older man's gaze was steadfast, good natured again. But Milroy refused to be taken in. This return to the normal might mean that decision had ripened in Carter's brain; and, deliberating, Milroy laid his final plan accordingly.

He figured that Carter—if the man intended to attack at all—would wait to catch him asleep the first or second day in the canoe. Constant vigilance, therefore, was the only solution. Milroy decided simply to stay awake for the three days and three nights until they arrived at Nagal, the nearest friendly village.

This task he was setting himself would not be easy, he was well aware; but the alternatives of killing or being killed were even less to his fancy. He could do it; he must do it. And once in Nagal, with or without explanations, he would leave Carter flat, proceed to Wimbi in another canoe.

Carter squatted on his heels beside the trail.

"I been figurin'," he began casually. "Six-seven days from here t' the coast. Then, say a week around t' Merauke by prau, an' two weeks t' Makassar on the *Gouverneur Daendals*. That's a month, ain't it?"

"Just about."

"Well, then even if I have t' go by Singapore, I c'n make Frisco in two months more. So three months from t'day I'll be on Market Street. ——!. That listens good!"

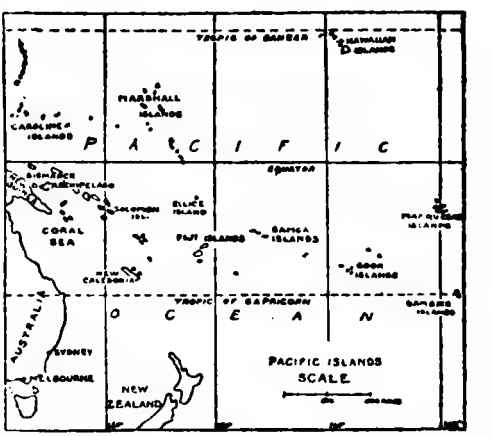
"Going home, eh?"

"You bet yer life! I've seen enough o' this —— googoo country."

"Not me," said Milroy. "I'm going to have a crack at coconut planting. Already got my eye on a place on the north coast of Lombok, near Labuan Blanda. Give me any kind of luck and I'll make five hundred per cent. in six years. Then I'll quit."

Carter stood erect again with a laugh. Reaching overhead, he broke a small twig from the underbrush. This he began to whittle into a toothpick.

"You c'n have yer coconuts," he declared amiably. "I want Frisco—quick. O' course, six thousand dollars ain't a —— of a lot t' go home on, but it's enough fer me. Gimme yer knife," he demanded abruptly. "Mine's dull."



With that Carter snapped his own knife shut, came and stood over his partner. Off guard for one moment, without changing position, Milroy reached into his pocket—and in that instant it happened.

Carter's hand flashed to his pistol; his arm jerked up and down. A tumult of color burst upon Milroy's senses; painless and soundless color. Then all went black.

SOMETIME later Milroy's brain cleared. His head hurt horribly where the heavy muzzle of Carter's automatic had landed. He expected to find himself prostrate on the trail, robbed by Carter of his arms and his share of the gold; but that was not exactly the way of it.

It came to him gradually that he was

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naked—stripped of everything—and lying on an uncomfortable flooring of woven bamboo. Slowly, his head lifted for a look around.

For a full minute after that he refused to credit his vision. The situation that greeted his eyes was appalling beyond any description. It drove out all consideration of his swollen and bleeding scalp, all mounting anger toward his partner; drove every emotion save sheer dismay out of his thoughts.

He was in a cage.

The cage stood in the center of a circle of grass huts, a Papuan village. These dwellings were about twenty in number, with doors opening into the circle. And at this first sign of life from Milroy, an immediate yelling arose.

Howling hideous black women and children rushed from all sides. They crowded around the cage gesticulating, gibbering and mowing.

Milroy was dazed, his mind in a whirl; but it was only too easy to understand what had happened. The Papuans, of course, had found him unconscious where Carter had left him. They had carried him to their village, stripped and confined him—and here he was!

A captive of the Papuans! Of the fierce wild man-eaters! His was an overwhelming predicament, unmanning. Milroy knew these jungle folk; he knew their unspeakable methods with all who fell into their hands.

To be eaten! Heaven help him from such a fate! The very awfulness of it gave strength to his brain.

"First off," he asked himself, "where am I?"

The sun was low down toward the surrounding jungle. Surely four or five hours had elapsed since noon.

"They've brought me across the Digool," Milroy decided; "no villages around here on the north side."

But what value in the knowledge? Carter was well away in the dugout, or he would be with the coming of darkness. Even if Milroy could get free, which seemed unlikely, escape meant a worse end than at the hands of the Papuans. Nakedness and starvation in the jungle, inevitable sunstroke, and finally madness. He shuddered at the thought.

Nevertheless, his will to live was indomitable. He stood up and examined his cage. It was of stout bamboo, nearly six feet square and more than twice that tall. Far overhead, above strong diagonals, it came to a pyramidal point.

There was no door. Entrance or egress could be effected only by removing a couple of uprights. Milroy went from bar to bar, testing the tough *rotan* fastenings. They were too secure for human fingers; and the corner posts were set deep in the ground.

"I'll not get out of here until they take me out," was the caged man's conclusion.

Observing his actions, the women outside shrieked afresh, raised shout upon shout of insane laughter. They poked sharp bamboos at Milroy through the bars, stabbing him painfully. The captive snatched a stick from a lean clawlike hand and slashed out with it viciously. That drove the rabble away, shrilling terrible glee.

Milroy sat down. But before he had time to collect his rioting thoughts a solitary black warrior, aroused perhaps by the commotion, emerged from one of the huts. He strode directly toward the white man's prison.

This Papuan was a veritable giant of a man, young and powerfully built. He was clad scantily in a loin-cloth. Tattoo marks intensified the savage ugliness of his features. There was an insolence in his bearing that made Milroy's blood boil.

"Nglideh!" said the warrior proudly. He struck his fist on his ponderous chest. "I am Nglideh, the chief!"

Milroy eyed the man.

"Ho!" came explosively before the captive could speak. "A strange place the white man chose for sleeping. A jungle path! Little comfort to be found on a jungle path!"

"More comfort than in this cage," Milroy retorted. "What fashion is this to treat a stranger in your country! Let me depart from here, man!"

Nglideh burst into a loud laugh.

"Let you depart! Ha, ha. No, white man! Thus I should lose many benefits."

"You would lose nothing," Milroy declared. "Look, I am naked. What more can I give you?"

"What more! Why, your courage and your wisdom, oh, white man."

Milroy was silent. Comprehension struck him with the force of a blow. The Papuan began to caper in an access of primitive exultation.

"Your courage and your wisdom, oh,

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white man!" he repeated. "The courage of your heart and the wisdom of your brain. Presently, I shall cut them from your body, and drink deep of your blood. Thus shall I become invincible to my enemies. Who of them all has eaten the red heart of a white man? Not one! None but Nglideh!"

Milroy with difficulty suppressed a gasp. Not of surprize; Nglideh's declaration was no more than he had expected. But the definite promise of such a death had a crushing effect.

He conquered it, however, and leaped to his feet. His position was desperate, calling for a bold front. Despite all disadvantages of garb and confinement, Milroy put his full reserve of white man's pride into the defiance he uttered.

"Then shall come white soldiers!" he rapped out hotly; "white warriors with fire in their mouths and nostrils. They shall seize Nglideh and Nglideh's people in their iron hands. And Nglideh's village shall vanish in the flames of many fires. So beware, oh, chief!" he cried. "Any courage you gain from my heart shall be sorely paid for!"

But Nglideh laughed.

"That is a tale for my women, not for me. Not for Nglideh! Wait; you shall see!"

The chief turned and walked hurriedly to one of the shacks.

He returned at once, dragging an inert form across the village compound. In astonishment Milroy saw that this form was a white man, naked as himself. Nglideh let go his burden in front of the cage. He indicated it with a gesture of contempt. It was Carter!

"Carter! Oh, my God!" thought Milroy, "they got him! The poor ——!"

And Nglideh laughed again.

"Behold!" was his triumphant invitation. "There lies a white warrior! There lies one who opposed me with the lightning and with the thunder of hard iron. But I leaped upon him from behind; I, Nglideh! See where I struck him dead with my *parang!*"

The chief pointed with his toe.

"He died like a goat; but I took no hurt. Pah! I have no fear of white warriors!"

With that Nglideh strode away.

CARTER was dead, stretched in the last rays of the sun while the women jabbed his body with bamboos. Milroy could do nothing. And after the first horror had passed he perceived how this event altered his own standing. Altered it, that is, if he ever got a chance to run for his life.

It all depended on where Nglideh had overcome Carter. If the encounter had taken place on the trail, then their dugout was still in the mangrove swamp. Considering Milroy's predicament, such a straw was little enough to take courage over; yet he felt a new surge of hope in all his being.

Swift tropical night was closing on the village. The women and children withdrew, and warriors from the huts were more and more in evidence. Milroy wondered how many of them would gather around when his cage was opened, wondered if he would be able to make a break for freedom.

"I'll give 'em a battle, anyway!" And, taking thought, he slumped into an attitude of exhaustion in one corner. "Perhaps they'll be a little careless," he muttered.

Suddenly the crashing sound of tom-toms burst on the still air. Milroy, through half-closed eyes, watched four women carrying faggots. They laid a huge fire about thirty paces from the cage. Its blaze threw the brown grass shacks into weird relief against the crowding black jungle.

Then Nglideh came out of his hut.

Fifty or more warriors followed him. Forming on either side of their chief, they sat down in an irregular circle around the fire. The night's feast commenced.

But not with food. Something happened on which Milroy had not counted, something which caused his heart to beat high with satisfaction. More women appeared bearing huge gourds; a gourd for each man, foam welling up from the necks like the froth on beer.

"*Tuak!*" the captive exulted inwardly. "If they drink enough of it, they'll be a helpless lot. I'll knock 'em like ten-pins when they open this cage. And they'll be afraid to follow me into the jungle at night."

Certainly the Papuans set about their drinking with good will. In the leaping light of the fire the gourds were swiftly in full play. Black arms reached out continually to lift the clumsy containers to thirsty lips.

For an hour this went on, the savages waxing loud of speech and unsteady in their movements.

Once two blacks staggered to their feet, grotesque in the firelight, shouting and

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waving their arms. They hurled drunken gibes at Milroy as they started for the huts. Presently they returned with the white men's weapons. These they passed around the circle from hand to hand. The Papuans touched the marvelous contraptions gingerly, uttering amazed exclamations.

But Milroy, watching closely, saw nothing of the packs. He supposed that the ignorant jungle-dwellers had thrown them away with their rich store of gold as burdens of no value. Small difference to him whatever they did! He was not vastly interested in gold just then.

Finally Nglideh came to the cage, walking with more assurance than his fellows.

"Ho, white man!" he taunted. "Here is good *tuak* to give my warriors zest for your flesh! But I need it not!"

Nglideh showered the contents of the gourd through the bars.

"Your heart and your brain will be tender indeed. Nglideh needs no *tuak!*"

The white man blinked the sickish liquor out of his eyes, but he did not move. Cold rage, however, made his fingers itch for the swaggering fellow's throat.

Now came the big supreme moment. An air of expectancy hung over all. At a word from Nglideh three drunken braves dragged Carter's body to the fire. Women brought in short thick cylinders of bamboo. Whereupon a villainous looking black stood up brandishing his glittering *parang*.

"A sharp *parang*," he chanted, "to cut the white man's flesh; and stout bamboo in which to roast it."

"But the heart and the brain will be sweeter without fire!" sang Nglideh. He made a sign to warriors near him.

Four of them scrambled to their feet. They reeled toward the cage, mocking at Milroy as they approached. A minute later they were hacking with their *parangs* at the *rotan* fastenings of two uprights; but Milroy still held his position of hopeless exhaustion.

Very likely the four savages felt secure in their numbers; and undoubtedly the rose-glow of potent *tuak* befogged their sense of caution. Jabbering, they shouldered each other aside, then jerked out one thick bamboo.

In the shadow Milroy drew up his feet until he knew he could rise with a sudden spring. Nobody noticed his movements. The Papuans reached for the second upright, loosened it so that it hung nearly free.

Came a bellow from Milroy, and a tremendous rush. Like a stone from a catapult, like a fullback bucking the line, he hurled himself at the aperture. In passing he caught firm hold of the loosened bamboo, wrenching it with him. The shock of his assault carried him out of the cage and bowled his four jailers in all directions.

They were not long bounding back; and Milroy laid about him, a naked whirling madman. A bamboo of three-inch diameter is no mean weapon in the hands of an active man. The club crushed two skulls in the first two swings; Milroy drove back the other two Papuans before the main body could rise on half-drunken legs.

Thus the way to escape was opened with ridiculous ease. The white man took to his heels.

He ran with all his strength. The howls of the savages lent speed to his flight. Convinced that he had been brought across the Digool, Milroy headed to the north. Like a panic-stricken fantom he dashed past the circle of huts. And sheer luck led him to the opening of a broad trail through the jungle.

Wild yelling sounded behind him. Milroy heard the thud of a hundred bare feet in hot pursuit. He did not look around. Putting everything in him into his effort, he plunged down the shadows of the trail.

The yelling dwindled away, dropping farther and farther behind. This accorded with the fugitive's presumption. Not many of the Papuans, he knew, were sober enough to run fast. None dared to follow him by night into this grim abode of the devil-devils. He eased up, husbanding his strength.

Now, for the first, he was aware of a moon—a hazy moon that barely showed him the winding trail. But that small help was a priceless favor. Otherwise, he could not have kept going. As it was, each slight deviation cost him much in the way of skin. Sharp roots pierced his bare feet; branches tore his legs, scratched and stabbed his unprotected body.

Of a sudden swift footsteps pounded behind him. A Papuan! There was one at least who dared! The white man sprang forward in a fresh burst of speed. But the black was already close. His heavy breathing hissed steadily about five yards back.

"Oh, fool!" came the labored snarl. "Do you think to escape from Nglideh?" It was the chief!

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Milroy set his teeth, ran with a lightness he had never before possessed. And running, he considered turning to come to grips with the huge savage.

This course, however, failed of appeal. Nglideh undoubtedly was armed with a keen-bladed *parang*. Still, the fugitive debated, conflict was inevitable. Perhaps—then the river flashed into sight, a sheet of dull gray beyond the black of the jungle.

There was a splash as Milroy dived into the stream.

Now was no time to worry about crocodiles. Another splash! Nglideh hit the water close behind. Milroy was already swimming toward the farther bank, cutting the surface with a strong overarm stroke.

Here the Digool was a hundred yards broad, deep and sluggish. In the middle Milroy risked looking back over his shoulder. He made out the bushy head of the chief about twenty yards behind. It was plain to be seen he was a better man in the water than the gigantic black.

At such times one thinks quickly, and Milroy's mind raced. He turned, treading water. None but Nglideh was in sight. And now or later it would be one or the other of them. Better to settle it here in the river.

The Papuan came to within five yards. He was swimming slowly, strongly, his *parang* gleaming in his right hand at every stroke. Inhaling deeply, Milroy dived toward the savage; toward him and under.

A dark form passed overhead, blotting out the gray flood of the moon. Milroy shot up both arms. He caught Nglideh's powerful right hand in an iron grip. Then he let himself sink.

Followed a curious struggle in the bowels of the river. It was dark with an utter darkness as the two men sank deeper and deeper. Milroy could see nothing; he depended on touch and intuition to guide his occasional slight movements.

Nglideh tried time and again to clinch, to break free, but Milroy prevented him. Wrestling, he knew, would bring them both to the surface on even terms. All he wanted to do was hang on, keep the Papuan from shifting his weapon to the other hand, drown him. And his mind was tortured with the fear that he could not stay under as long as the black.

Probably he could not have done so if the Papuan lay quiet. But the man thrashed about like a netted salmon, and Milroy simply dragged there, relaxed and heavy as lead. A full minute passed. Convulsions seized Milroy's stomach. His lungs hurt even after he released a little air. Blood throbbed painfully at his temples.

A minute. A minute and a quarter. Milroy felt as if his whole body must burst asunder. But the Papuan was weakening too; and all at once his arm went limp. For a moment Milroy was afraid his antagonist was tricking him, then the fingers under his fingers loosened their grip on the *parang*. The struggle was ended.

Feebly, gratefully, Milroy spurned the huge black body with his foot. Rising to the surface, he filled his aching lungs with good air. A slow paddle took him to the north bank.

No time to rest. The weary man strained his eyes in the hazy moonlight. Half a mile downstream stood that which he sought—the riven *djatti*-tree that marked the hiding-place of the dugout.

"It must be there!" Milroy told himself; "it *must!* I can't be let down that badly—get out of the hole I was in only to find the canoe gone."

And it was not gone. Twenty minutes later the white man stood beside it in the loathsome muck of the mangrove swamp.

There were noises all around him; horrible moist splashes that told of heavy crawling things. But Milroy was beyond heeding. Laying hold of the dugout, he dragged it to the river. Then he tumbled in. As he reached to untie a paddle from under the gunwale, a gasp of astonishment escaped him. Directly under his eyes were his own and Carter's packs.

The explanation came to Milroy as he paddled along. Nglideh, undoubtedly, had come upon Carter at the edge of the mangrove swamp. Carter had already made one trip into the swamp with the two packs. He was returning—probably for the rifles—when the Papuan surprized him.

Milroy shook his head. Nasty business through and through; but it could not be mended. And there was enough besides for him to think of—facing three days and three nights without food or clothing. A hideous nightmare! Still, unshaken courage was in Milroy's heart as he drove the dugout into the darkened west.

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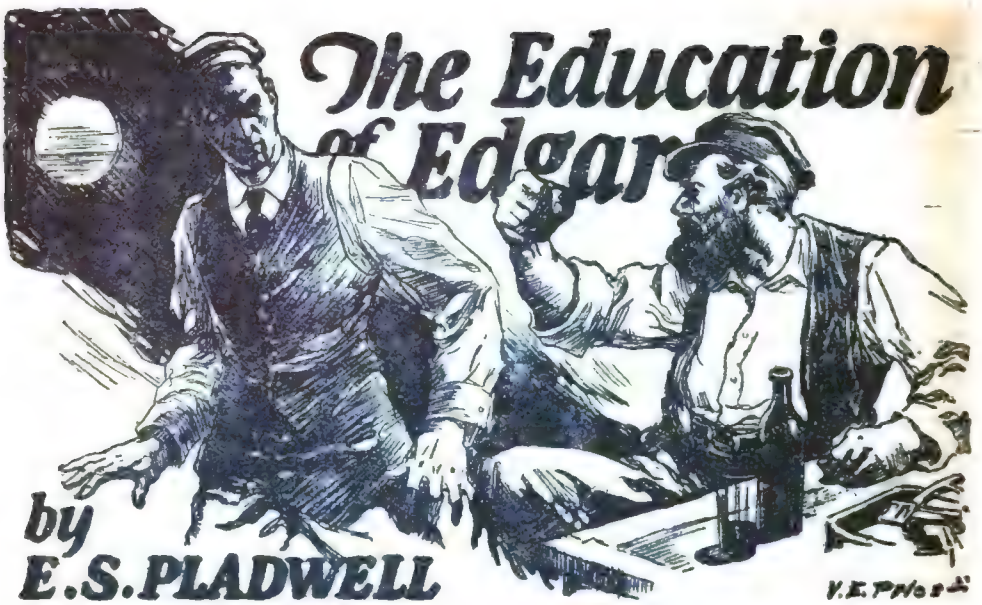

The Education of Edgar

by E. S. PLADWELL

Author of "Sweet Friendship," "An Agent of Providence," etc.

HE WAS a sailor, but not a rollicking sailor. He had cruised on mincing yachts and dainty liners, acquiring a first mate's ticket by mental efficiency which atoned for his polite deep-sea experience. He was tall, slim and somewhat blond, with slender hands, a sensitive mouth, a cleft chin and a ramrod back. His eyes were honest and blue. His name, unfortunately, was Edgar. Otherwise he was a typical smart young officer of the approved pattern found on regular steamships.

But now a violent bass voice bellowed ferocious disapproval. The voice floated up to the bridge of a rough little freighter. It came from the cabin of Edgar's skipper and father, just abaft the chart-house and forward of the dinky black funnel.

"Send that —— lounge-lizzy first mate here!"

"The cap'n wants you!" announced Brill, the second, jerking a thumb aft. "The old man's loaded! Better strap a pillow behind your pants!"

"That will do!" he managed to reprimand, mildly.

"Aw, rats!" snorted Brill. "Beat it!"

The first mate's face reddened but he made his way to the skipper's cabin, first glancing about with the unconscious alertness of a trained watch-officer. The distant blue-green hills of the Golden Gate were still visible off the port quarter, beyond the wake of the ship and its whirling sea-gulls.

The skipper was built on the physical and mental lines of a steam-roller. He sat entrenched behind a long table, with a bottle and glass at his left elbow. His bulbous nose and snapping gray eyes showed a reddish tinge, heightened by contrast with the enormous black beard which fringed his whole face. He glared at Edgar.

"Blah!" he exploded.

Edgar stood at attention.

"You want me, sir?"

The skipper's mighty hand twitched.

"I don't know whether I want you or not! —— it, are *you* the sort o' ribbon-counter sailor they breed nowadays?"

"I've done my best, sir!"

"Your best! Huh! On the Watkins Liners—gold braid and promenades with the ladies! Your best! In *my* day they bred *men* —— roarin', two-legged, two-fisted, two-bottle *men!*"

There was a long, strained silence.

"Is there any objection to a sailor being clean and sober, sir?" inquired Edgar. "Is there any reason why a sailor should not be a gentleman?"

"Gentleman b' ——!" roared the skipper. "I got you aboard my ship so I'd make a *man* of you! Gentleman b' ——!"

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"I thought there was a hook in it," observed Edgar.

"A hook in what?"

"When you got the owners to give me this berth as first mate, sir. I remember you asked me to come with you, very earnestly."

"You bet!" snorted the captain. "I wanted to get you aboard a *man's* ship!"

Edgar choked back a retort. The tough old skipper's voice became milder.

"I'm doin' it for your own sake, son. Mebbe you've got the stuff in you; I dunno; we'll find out!"

The skipper sighed. His eyes, half-alcoholic, showed a faint trace of moisture.

"To think that the son of 'Hell-Roaring' Jerry Strang is turnin' out to be a sissy! Me—the man that used to make the best time in the Pacific! My crews were in the riggin' like scared cats—they caught every wind—but never mind that!"

The captain shook off his softer mood. His terrific fist banged on the table.

"Manhandle your crew!" he bawled. "They're laughin' at you already. Fight 'em! Stretch 'em out! Knock 'em cold! You hear me? Them's orders! This is no painted liner; this is a man's ship!"

The skipper took another drink, clinking bottle against glass. Edgar, whose complexion had turned slightly paler, gazed thoughtfully beyond his sire and out of the starboard port to the sunny blue Pacific, now strangely ominous. The deck under his feet vibrated to the regular pulsing of the little freighter's hard-working engine—*thrum, thrum, thrum, thrum.*

"*Edgar!*" mumbled the Captain. "Your mother did that! While I was at sea! Edgar! Blah!"

The skipper looked at his bottle thoughtfully.

"By the way, who's this girl you're makin' up to?"

"Aileen Lyman, sir; a school teacher."

"School teacher! Ya-a-a-a! Let that school teacher alone! I'll pick a wife for you, if you want one!"

"No, thanks," demurred Edgar.

The brawny skipper grabbed the arms of his chair.

"Shut up! Don't give *me* any of your lip!"

Edgar shut up. The skipper, who was about to arise passionately, subsided and looked down upon his bottle. An inspiration seized him. He grasped the tumbler and filled it brimful of heavy raw brandy.

"Drink this!" he ordered.

The young first mate grew paler. The skipper arose to his mighty height, towering up to the low-hung beams.

"Drink it!" he bawled. "It'll put hair on your chest!"

"But—" pleaded Edgar, desperately.

The captain lurched around the table and shoved the glass into his son's hand.

"Drink, me hearty!" thundered the skipper, slapping the mate on the back and nearly knocking him flat. "Drink 'er down like a sailorman!"

"I can't, sir!"

"Huh! I know you can't, you pink-pajama sissy! And you the son of Hell-Roaring Jerry Strang! You! Drink it, drink it!"

"No!"

"Drink that brandy!"

Edgar, literally under the shadow of a menacing figure, tried to step back; but his movement was blocked by a powerful arm. The young man shut his eyes. He couldn't fight and he couldn't run, and his father was now in deadly earnest. Half-consciously the young mate found himself swallowing the fiery stuff. It seemed to burn down through his insides, even to his toes.

"That's enough for one day!" bawled the terrible skipper. "Go back on the bridge, sir!"

Edgar turned mechanically and walked to the deck. To his own surprize, the bridge and the wheel-house held to their accustomed proportions, and even the white-whiskered quartermaster seemed but slightly out of focus as he lazily twirled the spokes of the big wheel; but a feeling of unrest within Edgar warned him to seek the cushioned bench at the rear of the house.

Suddenly the sky and the blue Pacific began to whirl in dizzy circles. Edgar tried to steady himself. His head fell forward. Numbness seized him. He sprawled to the deck.

The captain, climbing to the bridge, beckoned the grinning second mate. Together they lifted the first mate and carried him to his cabin, where the grim old father put him to bed.

"Huh!" observed the black-bearded terror, with a certain tenderness, "We'll make a sailorman out of him yet, Brill!"

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"Yeh," agreed Brill. "He'll be a regular old shellback when *we* get through with him, sir!"

"I wonder if he's got the stuff in him?" mused the skipper.

"Sure," said Brill, rolling a quid of tobacco in his mouth. "The boy's all right, sir; he's been trained wrong!"

"Well, we'll cure that!" snorted the skipper.

But mercifully they allowed the young first mate several days of comparative rest. Edgar thoughtfully resumed his duties without even a headache to tell of his recent experience. The sea was calm and sunny. The old steamer plowed through it steadily. The hard-working engines never ceased their regular *thrum-thrum-thrum*.

The freighter passed Santa Barbara channel. She passed San Pedro. She began to approach San Diego and neared the warmer, bluer waters of the Mexican coast; but before she reached that point the vessel slowed down and lay to. From eastward, under the hills of the yellowish California shoreline, came a puffing little tug. Edgar curious, noted the tug arrive alongside the vessel. At that moment the big skipper took the bridge. He turned to Edgar.

"Go below!" he bawled, pointing aft.

"But—" remonstrated Edgar.

"Go below!" roared the skipper, belligerently. "This here's private business! Keep your fingers out! Go below!"

"But," argued Edgar, mildly, "a first mate is supposed to handle matters of cargo—"

"Shut up!" thundered the skipper. "I'm runnin' this!"

The captain grew impatient and shook a mighty fist.

"Keep your —— lily-white nose out o' this! Hear me? Or do I have to bust you one?"

In the face of such truculence Edgar was forced to withdraw, thinking many thoughts. From the seclusion of his cabin he heard the clank of winches and the hoarse roars of his father; but the young man thought it best not to interrupt.

The tug left. The freighter resumed its way, and Edgar took up his duties without incident except that the hard-faced crew obeyed his orders without alacrity. The skipper finally approached Edgar on the subject again, while Edgar was on the bridge.

"Slam 'em!" bawled his mighty father. "Wadda you layin' down for? Fight 'em!"

"I can't sir," remonstrated Edgar. "There's no actual *casus-belli*."

"What?" bawled the skipper.

"*Casus-belli*. Reason for overt action, sir."

The black-bearded old tryant glared belligerently.

"Huh! We wait for no casus-bellys on this ship! If a man doesn't jump to your orders, smash him! This is about your last warning, young man! Casus-belly! Huh!"

The skipper turned on his heel and strode to his cabin. Edgar thoughtfully walked aft.

He was unhappy. He knew he had been inveigled into this professional hell-ship so that his blusterous father might satisfy a belated sense of duty; but the son was not entirely convinced. It was a trifle overrough; good enough for the 1883 type of biff-bang rule-of-fist seaman but, for modern times, slightly exaggerated. Edgar felt that it led to unhappiness, for officers and men alike. Including Edgar.

Moodily he strode 'midships. Campbell, the chief engineer, was leaning his stocky, overalled figure against the engine-room ventilator, just abaft the dinky black funnel. Campbell was smoking a pipe and enjoying the faint breeze. His broad grime-streaked face turned toward the mate and he gave Edgar a friendly grin, not unmixed with pity. Edgar nodded casually.

"Well, chief, how's everything below?"

"Hot," said the chief.

Edgar noted that the chief did not use the 'sir' when addressing him; in fact he noticed that the chief neglected this respectful word quite often to the mates except when given an official order concerning the working of the ship. The chief was a friendly, chatty soul who apparently reserved his main stock of 'sirs' for the captain and left the lesser fry to worry along with a reduced ration. It nettled Edgar slightly; but there were so many larger irritations on this boat that Edgar overlooked it. He accepted the chief's remark as it lay. The engines were hot. Not hot, sir; just plain hot. The chief had been on the boat many years and was a privileged character. Edgar's reply made due allowances:

"Yes; we're getting into warmer waters."

"It's not that," growled the chief. "It's the oil. New stuff. Experiments."

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The talkative chief waxed sarcastic:

"'Try it out,' says the owner. 'This looks like good stuff.' Good stuff! Hah! But not for engines; no. It's a good molasses base, mixed with a good quality o' water! Good stuff! Hah! We'll be burnin' up five thousand dollars worth o' bearin's, to save forty cents a barrrel on the oil!"

"Can you keep up your speed?" wondered Edgar.

"Eleven knots? Aye; if we nurse her; but I'd rather have ten. Or nine!"

"The Captain knows all about this?"

"He knows. Sure. He wants eleven. 'It's dangerous' says I. 'Shut up,' says he. And that's all of that. It's his disposition. Oh, well; I'm not complainin'; there'll be no damage—probably!"

Edgar looked eastward toward the hazy mountains of the Lower California coast.

"We'll make Acapulco easily by the fifteenth at this rate," he considered. "Easily."

"What's the rush?" demanded the chief.

"I thought you knew. This old bucket was chartered by a man named Armstrong. He has an option on a lot of fustic at Acapulco. The option expires on the fifteenth at midnight. We're chartered to get there, take up the option and bring back the fustic. Otherwise some big Canadian company gets it."

"Fustic?" pondered the Chief.

"Yes. A logwood. Yellow. Valuable for coloring matter."

The chief blew a lungful of smoke toward a lifeboat which had cooked in the sun for ten years in its present position without moving an inch.

"Mebbe we'll hold together all right," grunted the chief.

The skipper's giant form emerged from his cabin.

"Have an awning stretched for'd!" he ordered.

Edgar went beyond the bridge, where two blowsy seamen were doing nothing at the port rail.

"Mattos!" ordered the first mate. "You and Kreig stretch a tarpaulin for'd."

Kreig, a stout Dutchman, stared at him.

"Snap into it!" requested Edgar.

Krieg turned away and squirted tobacco-juice overside.

Edgar turned pale. His lips tightened. He knew that here was his supreme moment. A deck-hand had sneered at him openly! True, the deck-hand had not actually disobeyed his order; not yet; but the man and his swarthy companion stood grinning at him. Possibly the captain had put them up to it. Edgar suspected it. He clenched his fists, though he was not enraged but merely irritated. Stubbornly he started forward.

The two deck-hands slipped around the corner, under the bridge and out of sight. They might be heading for the sail-locker and they might not. Edgar considered following them. He halted.

A wild bull-like voice bellowed from the bridge. It was the skipper. His face was livid with passion. He waved his clenched fists madly at the sky as he rushed down the steps toward his son.

"Ya-a-a-a!" he howled, leaping down the steps. "You bum! You coward! You yellow-livered sissy! You —— tame cat! Ya-a-a-a! You ——!"

The skipper stopped speaking. His eyes rounded. A look of stark surprize transfixed his purpling face. His arms fell to his sides. His face distorted in dumb perplexity. He drew a long breath; then another; then another, sobbing and drooling in a mad effort to find words. Then he lurched against the rail.

"Dad!" cried the horrified Edgar.

The skipper tried to steady himself but couldn't. His expression was sheer amazement and something resembling terror.

"Brill!" yelled Edgar. "Krieg! Jennings! Schwartzkopf! Come here! Lend a hand!"

The second mate and the idle members of the crew ran up.

"Take him to his bunk!" commanded Edgar. "Help me lift him! Put him to bed!"

Brill looked keenly at the skipper's livid face.

"Paralysis!" nodded Brill. "I've seen it before!"

It was not paralysis. It was an edema, a temporary suspension of the functions of arms and tongue, caused by acidosis from too much brandy and too high a temper; but to the awed crew Brill's diagnosis seemed correct. They carried the skipper to his bunk, where he breathed like a wheezy bellows and glared with baffled eyes at the whitewashed beam above him.

Edgar and Brill rubbed the skipper down with alcohol, gave him hot toddies, and, after a night of labor, lulled him to

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sleep and left the cook to attend him. They thoughtfully went to the bridge.

"It's all off," grunted Brill. "You're in command!"

"What's all off?" demanded Edgar.

"Oh, just a little education—never mind!"

"I see!" said Edgar, stiffly. "Take the bridge, Mr. Brill. I'll relieve you early. Keep on the course."

Edgar took a last look into the skipper's cabin. Campbell, the chief engineer, appeared at the doorway.

"Can't we slow down?" begged the chief.

"All right," decided Edgar. "Make it nine. We've plenty of time!"

BUT next morning Edgar noticed that the engines were pulsing as fast as ever. Edgar sensed that something else was wrong. The lights and shadows on the rail stanchions outside his cabin port showed that the ship was heading straight into the rising sun—almost due east! And Acapulco was far to the southward!

Edgar jumped into his clothes and ran to the bridge. The sleepy-eyed Brill grinned amiably.

"What does this mean?" demanded Edgar. "We're off the course!"

"Cap'n's orders," grunted Brill. "We're makin' for Mazatlan. It was all fixed before he took sick."

Edgar stiffened.

"I have heard no such orders," he snapped. "We are bound for Acapulco under charter!"

"Yes; but the skipper wanted to make Mazatlan."

"I have received no such orders."

"You wouldn't," returned Brill. "This is a little private deal. What do you think we loaded cargo for? Exercise?"

"I have received no instructions concerning Mazatlan. Quartermaster, swing her around!"

Brill leaped to the wheel.

"Let that alone!" he roared. "You keep out o' this!"

Edgar's face became white.

"You are in mutiny, sir!" he snapped.

"G'wan! You're in mutiny, you mean! I'm obeyin' the cap'n's orders!"

"You are disobeying your immediate superior, sir!"

"Aw, blazes!" Brill looked irritated. "You darned fool—the skipper and I have worked together for ten years! We know what we're doin'! You keep your lily-white fingers out o' this!"

Edgar, still white-faced, held his temper.

"We must be in Acapulco by the fifteenth. We are under charter. It's a matter of honor, Mr. Brill!"

"Yeh? Well, our word is pledged at Mazatlan, too! We're due to land a cargo there! We've been allowin' for it, makin' up the time by extra speed."

"The engines will not stand it!"

"Aw, rats! Campbell's an old grandmother about his engines!"

Edgar felt cornered. He realized the truth in everything Brill had said. The cargo was undoubtedly intended for Mazatlan and the engines had undoubtedly been speeded in order to make the extra trip. But Edgar was now—presumably—in command. The fate of the ship was in his hands. The man who chartered this vessel for a trip to Acapulco—paying his good money for honest service—was being trifled with. There was no doubt of it. Of course the side-trip might be made without mishap; but what if Campbell was correct about his engines? And if anything went wrong, who would be blamed? Edgar!

"I will take the bridge, Mr. Brill," announced Edgar, making his decision. "You are relieved."

Brill looked puzzled.

"All right," grunted Brill. "Just keep 'er due east!"

Edgar's reply was icy:

"I am in command, Mr. Brill!"

"Bla-a-a-ah!" exploded the second. "You —— fool—wadda you mean, tryin' to pull this liner stuff on me? Hey? You carry out the orders of the skipper!"

"I have heard no such orders!" retorted Edgar, stubbornly. "Quartermaster, swing her!"

Brill, momentarily balked by sea-law, swept it aside with one gust of passion.

"Get off this bridge!" he bawled. "Go on—beat it! I don't care whether you're first mate or not! Get outa here! We can't have babies runnin' this thing! You beat it!"

Edgar—amazed and outraged—stared with round eyes at the husky mate. Brill, having crossed his Rubicon, pointed toward the steps.

"Beat it!" he roared. "Get off the bridge!"

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Edgar, white-faced, considered violence; but the mate who had flouted sea-law looked amply ready for trouble. Edgar descended from the bridge.

It was not cowardice but a sense of futility. He had to do something about it; but he didn't know what. He made his way to the engine-room steps. He descended and found himself on an iron grating, watching the whirring electric-lighted machinery below him. The smell of hot metal assailed his nostrils.

The chief saw him and came up to the grating, wiping his black hands in a wad of oily waste.

"The shaft's smokin' in the collar!" groaned the chief. "She'll burn! It's too fast! Them roughnecks up on deck don't know what an engine is! They think all they have to do is tinkle a bell! Huh!"

Edgar walked to the deck

"I've got to do something!" he muttered. "Got to!"

Edgar, a man of peace shoved into a most distasteful war, strode to his father's darkened cabin. He opened a table drawer. He pulled forth a heavy Navy revolver. Then he softly shut the drawer and ambled forward. He wondered that his pulse did not leap and his heart beat faster; but he was normal, deadly normal. He marveled at himself. He did not appreciate that Edgar, who could be flouted personally, was now an executive officer on the job. He did not analyze this far. He only realized that he had a duty; stern duty, disagreeable duty, but duty!

Calmly he walked up the steps to the bridge. Calmly he strode into the wheel-house, revolver in hand. Calmly he spoke.

"You are relieved, Mr. Brill!"

Brill's eyes flared with anger.

"Put that thing down!" he roared. "Put it down! You're gummin' up the program—you're dippy!"

Brill waved vehement fists.

"You idiot—cut out that stuff!"

"Get off the bridge, Mr. Brill!"

Brill's body tensed. He seemed to consider taking a chance with the slighter man; but something in Edgar's cool eyes made him reconsider.

"You're crazy!" groaned Brill, disgustedly. "Say—look here, you fool—your dad stands to win two thousand dollars by landin' these rif—these goods up above Mazatlan tomorrow! Your dad's given his promise. He'll cut your heart out! Drop that gun!"

"Get off the bridge!" said Edgar, coldly.

Brill opened his mouth. Then he closed it. The boy was not angry; he was not dramatic; he was merely straightforward. Instinct warned Brill that he would pull trigger unemotionally. The second mate did some fast thinking.

"All right," said Brill, with a quick about-face. "I give you the bridge, then!"

Brill went. Edgar stared at him, wondering at his sudden meekness. Then the young man nodded to the quartermaster. The vessel listed and turned, leaving a curved white wake in the sunny ocean behind it. Edgar seated himself in the cushions behind the wheel. He was victorious but he wasn't quite sure about it. There was something lacking somewhere.

Quivering decks reminded him of the engines. He ordered slower speed. Then he resumed his throne while the quartermaster lazily twirled the spokes of the wheel.

Time passed. The soft scuffle of the man's feet and the subdued *thrum-thrum-thrum* of the engines exerted a hypnotic influence. Edgar began to doze.

Suddenly the vessel listed. Edgar sprang to his feet. The quartermaster was twirling the wheel madly but it seemed to have no influence whatever upon the ship. She was turning eastward again, leaving another curved white wake behind her in the blue sea.

"Disconnected!" exclaimed Edgar.

"She's out o' control," agreed the bearded quartermaster, with a shrewd glance at his superior officer. "Somebody's usin' the hand-steerin' gear in the after wheel-house!"

"Yes," snapped Edgar. "Somebody is!"

"They win!" ruled the quartermaster, judicially. "It looks like we'll go to Mazatlan!"

"Not with me aboard!" declared Edgar, now thoroughly angry. "Stay by your wheel. I'm going aft!"

"But——"

"You shut up! Hand me down that fire-ax from the rack above you!"

The quartermaster handed it down, somewhat gingerly. Edgar, with ax in hand and pistol in pocket, strode to the after wheel-house. Several seamen lounged near the rails, like interested spectators about to watch a game; but Edgar was concerned

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with the persons entrenched in their castle.

"Open that door!" he commanded. "Come out!"

There was a moment of silence. Then came the second mate's muffled voice from inside:

"Aw, cut it out! Be reasonable!"

"Come outside!" ordered Edgar, coldly.

"Listen!" pleaded Brill. "Be a good fellow! Cut out that stuff. We don't want to fight you! You're the skipper's son. We're tryin' to make money for your dad. We're doin' our duty by him and you! —— it, be reasonable!"

"We have argued enough!" replied Edgar, coldly. "Now I give you my orders: Come out!"

Brill, exasperated, let his voice arise in passion.

"Well, since you put it that way, you can kiss my foot!"

"Mutiny!" snapped Edgar.

"Aw, go jump overboard! I'm obeyin' your father, not you! Let us alone! We can run the ship, all right! Beat it!"

Edgar swung the ax and buried its blade in the heavy door. He raised the ax again and slammed its blade into the wood. He chopped again and again—crash, crash, crash!

"Hey!" yelled Brill, who hadn't expected this.

Crash-crash-crash-crash! The door began to splinter from top to bottom. Two of the deck-hands behind Edgar decided to take a hand. They began to center toward him, but he happened to see them. He faced them, brandishing the ax.

"Get back!" he roared.

The men retreated. Edgar assaulted the door again. Just as it was splintering to pieces it opened voluntarily. Brill stepped forth, holding up his hand.

"All right!" snarled Brill. "You bull-headed idiot, go in there, then! I hope you enjoy yourself! Go right in! Come on, boys, let's get out of here!"

Brill moved forward, followed by his tattered crew. Edgar, somewhat suspicious, fiddled with the hand-steering gear until the vessel swung on a south-southeast course. Then Edgar waited, watching through the door and wondering what was coming next.

Nothing came. Not even food. Not even water. The crew had disappeared magically. In a short time Edgar began to feel the pangs of hunger and thirst. The engines commenced pounding faster. Eleven knots again!

"Stubborn!" moaned Edgar.

Two hours wore away. The deck remained deserted. Edgar's hunger and thirst became unbearable. It was a hot day and the wheel-house, with its steam steering-gear, was like an oven. Edgar began calculating. If he could leave the wheel for a moment and slip across the after-deck and into the galley for a quick snack, nothing might happen! If something did happen, he still had the only revolver on the ship!

Deciding quickly, Edgar slipped across the after-deck and made his way toward the quarters on the port side.

He opened the galley door. The galley was comparatively dark. He blinked. A sudden pair of hands grabbed his wrists, a burly arm went around his neck from behind, and in an instant he was pinioned by three men.

"I hate to do this," said Brill, grimly uncoiling some rope, "but it's gotta be done!"

"Mutiny!" rasped Edgar.

"Aw, play another tune!" snorted Brill.

A deep voice growled from just outside the door. It belonged to one Schleuter, a ragged, broad-beamed Dutchman with a red face.

"Id ain'd righd!" bawled Schleuter. "Der first made, he iss der gommander of der shib!"

"What?" shrieked Brill.

"Id ain'd righd!" mumbled Schleuter, sullenly.

Brill leaped out of the door in a broad-jump. He landed upon the luckless seaman with both fists. The seaman ducked. Brill, hauling back a powerful right arm, drove his third blow upon the side of the Dutchman's jaw. The seaman collapsed on the deck.

"Ya-a-a-a!" snarled Brill. "So the deck-hands are tellin' the officers what to do! So that's the sort o' discipline we've got aboard! Well, I'll see to that! Anybody else got any objection?"

Brill glared around at the crew.

"Speak up! Speak right up!"

Nobody spoke up. Schleuter arose, holding a hand to his ear and shaking his head vigorously.

"This," remarked Edgar, "has gone far enough!"

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Brill, without retort, tied Edgar's wrists with many sailorlike knots and triced them behind his back. Edgar, whose wrists and fingers were slim, tensed the muscles while they were being tied; but Brill did not observe this. Brill tossed the revolver into the sea, hauled Edgar to his cabin, shut the door, caught the spring lock and went aft again. In a moment the deck tilted slightly and the vessel resumed its eastward course.

Edgar began to twist and wriggle his fingers. In fifteen minutes his arms were free.

It was no trick of legerdemain. His fingers were pliant. They worried and clawed at the knots until one came loose; and then the whole binding began to give away. Edgar released himself and sat on his bunk to think it out.

The door opened. The broad-shouldered Schleuter appeared, trying to walk stealthily. Edgar, to his amazement, walked out past him.

"Now what?" wondered Edgar.

"Id ain'd righd!" replied Schleuter, dumbly.

"No; but we've got to take action!" Edgar started forward. "Let's see. Weapons. There's a couple of bars by that winch forward. Get 'em!"

Edgar, without waiting, turned into the engine-room doorway.

"Slow down!" he yelled, to the machinery below.

The chief came to the grating. He looked irritated.

"Sa-a-a-a-y! What sort of a merry-go-round is this? First it's slow and then it's fast! Why don't you make up your minds?"

"Perhaps you can help the situation!" scoffed Edgar.

"Mebbe I will!" snorted the chief. "I'll go up!"

The chief popped out of the engine-room door just as Brill came around the corner of the deck-house. Brill's jaw dropped when he saw Edgar. Then Schleuter appeared, carrying two heavy iron bars.

"Drop them!" thundered Brill.

"The man is acting under my orders!" said Edgar.

The maddened Brill, clenching vehement fists, noted that the vibration of the deck was slacking. Brill glared at the chief.

"I told you to speed up!" roared Brill.

"You did!" agreed Campbell, sweetly, "But who's runnin' this mad-house, anyhow?"

"The second mate is mutinous!" explained Edgar.

"Ya-a-a-a-a!" screamed Brill, waving his fists. "Keep your puppy hands outa this business!"

"Nine knots, Mr. Campbell!" ordered Edgar, stiffly.

"Eleven!" contradicted Brill. "I've had about enough of this! Time's flyin'! Get back to your engines!"

The chief, having had a good look at the rumpus, turned slowly toward his machinery.

"I guess I'll take a rest!" he announced. "I'll shut down till you fellows get through with your election!"

"*What?*" shrieked Brill.

"It'll help to cool the bearin's," explained the chief.

"No!" yelled the half-frantic Brill.

"Nine knots, Mr. Campbell!" reiterated Edgar. "I am the senior officer here!"

"Sure you are," agreed Campbell, sweetly. "And you're the skipper's son. But Brill and me have sailed together for ten years. He knows his business. If he's takin' command, it's for good reason. I can't offend Brill and I can't offend you; so I'll go into my bunk and take a nap. I love my engines. It'll do 'em good to get a rest. It'll help 'em tremenjus. Send me the box-score when the battle's over."

"You'll do what you're ordered to do!" yelled Brill, stepping forward passionately. "Get me?"

The chief extracted a heavy pipe-wrench from the rear of his overalls.

"Since you put it that way," said Campbell, "I'll rule that this young man is in command of the ship!"

Brill's face contorted into a wrathful sneer.

"Ya-a-a-a! So you think you're a Supreme Court because you've got a wrench in your hand! Well, we'll see about that! Krieg! Jennings! Schwartzkopf! Bring them bars from yonder donkey!"

The chief retreated within his doorway. In a moment two husky oilers showed their grime-streaked faces behind him. Brill's friends ran up. Edgar nimbly slipped aside from them.

"Make it nine!" he called to Campbell.

"Nine it is, sir!" said Campbell, nodding.

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"Listen!" shrieked Brill. "For the last time——"

But Edgar rushed to the after-wheel before Brill could divine his purpose. Edgar, brandishing a bar, shooed a Portuguese away from the hand-gear. Then he closed the ax-smitten door and barricaded it. In a moment the ship was swinging southward again.

Brill arrived and pounded at the door. From afar came a sound as if two factions were holding combat near the engineroom.

"We've fooled away half a day!" yelled Brill, with agony in his voice. "Be reasonable! Swing her!"

"You'd better give it up!" advised Edgar, grimly.

"All right, you stubborn fool—all right! I'll get an ax! We'll see!"

Brill walked away. The sounds of conflict redoubled up forward. Edgar heard muffled yells. Then hasty footsteps came toward his fortress.

"Led me in!" pleaded Schleuter's terrified voice.

Edgar did some quick thinking.

"Wait!" he ordered. "Get some grub out of the galley! Enough for a day! Then come back!"

The footsteps retreated. There was silence except for the ordinary clanking sounds in the wheel-house. Then feet pattered outside again.

There was a crash.

Brill's terrific voice bawled, just outside Edgar's doorway:

"Bringin' a tray full o' grub, are you? Disobeyin' my orders, are you? Huh! I'll learn you!"—thud—"I'll learn you!"—thud—"take sides against *me*, will you——"

There was a yell from Schleuter. Two pair of feet pattered away excitedly and soon the yell was far distant.

More silence ensued. Edgar's dark, smelly quarters grew hotter. His appetite became ravenous. An hour later he heard Brill's voice from far forward:

"The —— Dutchman's up in the crows-nest! At him—at him!"

There were muffled sounds of conflict, which gradually subsided.

THREE hours passed. Edgar watched the waters from a little wheel-house port, and later in the afternoon he was gratified by a glimpse of the far away Mexican hills. Brill was beaten. He couldn't possibly reach Mazatlan in time now. Edgar knew Brill was beaten. But did Brill realize it?

Brill did not. At sunset he worked on the wheel-house door with an ax.

"Stop it!" implored Edgar. "You stubborn idiot, what are you fighting for?"

"Ya-a-a-a!" roared Brill, violent with baffled passion. "I'm goin' to get you outside and kick the liver out of you! You —— young puppy, you've spoiled the whole show!"

"That's your fault!" rasped Edgar.

"Ya-a-a-a!" There was a plaintive note in Brill's voice. "Me and your dad kept our crews tamed for ten years—we ran this ship right—and now look at 'em! Ya-a-a-a! The engineer's fightin' the deck gang! Schleuter's up in the riggin' with a crowbar! Another man's holdin' the galley with a hot poker! Defyin' their officers! A —— of a ship! A —— of a ship! And you've done it! You—you snub-nosed pink-pajama sissy-boy—wait till I catch hold of you! Wait!"

Crash! Crash! The blade of Brill's ax slammed through the door!

"You lunatic!" yelled Edgar. "You poke your face in here and I'll brain you!"

"We'll see!" snorted the frantic Brill. "We'll see!"

Something else crashed into the door. It was a wrench, apparently thrown across the deck at the second mate.

"Mutiny!" yelled Brill, dashing away from the wheel-house in mad pursuit.

Edgar, given a respite, kept to his wheel grimly, holding his heavy iron bar handy in case of trouble. Night came. The sounds of far-away conflict resumed and died down. Edgar was half-starved but he tightened his belt. Sometimes he dozed, mesmerized by the steady *thrum-thrum-thrum* of the engines.

Morning came. Sunshine glinted through the little cabin port. Edgar, looking out, saw the brown-green hills of Mexico close by. He knew that Acapulco was but a few miles to the southward.

Suddenly a terrific yell arose forward. Then came the scuffling of feet. Somebody ran to the wheel-house and knocked on the door vehemently. It was Brill.

"Lemme in!" bawled Brill. "Hurry! Hurry!"

It was the cry of a desperate man. It was also the cry of an officer of the ship.

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Edgar, sensing that the man was in dire circumstances, decided it was the first mate's duty to let the second mate in. Things had gone far enough. Edgar opened the door quickly. Brill panting and red-faced, rushed inside and closed the barrier.

"What is it?" demanded Edgar.

Feet pattered outside the door. Profane voices yelled. Brill, instead of giving thanks for his rescue, turned on Edgar savagely. The second mate's self-control was entirely shattered after a night of wild fighting.

"You mutt!" snarled Brill. "You long-eared scatter-brained puppy—look what you've done! Mutiny! Mutiny fore and aft! It's all your work! Ya-a-a-a! Now that I've got you here, I'll learn you somethin'!"

Edgar kept his hand on the iron bar.

"You're excited," ruled Edgar. "Cool down!"

"Cool down!" shrieked Brill. "Cool down? Ya-a-a-a!"

With a sudden leap Brill sprang at Edgar, before the latter could lift his bar. The heavier man's wild fist caught Edgar on the side of his head, knocking him backward.

"You puppy!" screeched Brill. "You —— interferin' puppy—I'll learn you—I'll bust that slick face of yours if I have to hang for it ——"

Edgar, cornered by a wild man, tried to shoulder away from Brill's charging body. The impact bounced Edgar against the wall. Brill's mighty fist struck him on a left rib and nearly broke it.

Edgar, maddened by pain, drew back his free hand. He lashed out with a straight blow that caught the violent Brill full upon the chin.

Crack! Brill's head wobbled back and his knees gave under him. He slumped to the floor, a quivering mass!

"Great Scott!" groaned the amazed Edgar.

Footsteps pattered outside. Yells came into the wheel-house. Edgar, thinking quickly, decided to open the door and face the mob which had chased Brill. Probably they were Edgar's own partisans. He decided to quell the row and bring peace to the ship.

He stepped outside, holding the bar in his hand. Edgar, famished, bleary-eyed, dirty and wild looking, glared at the crowd, with his hair waving in every direction.

"Hurrah!" yelled a sailor. "We've won!"

The chief, in the background, standing like a pleased spectator, waved a spanner toward the forward wheel-house.

"That's that!" bawled the chief, with satisfaction. "Now we'll get them two fellas holdin' the bridge!"

The men, with a yell, swept forward.

"Stop it!" groaned Edgar. "Here you fellows ——"

But the fighting had begun. Edgar, weary and grieved, looked upon a deck littered with the signs of conflict. Schleuter, standing by the after hatch, wore a red bandage around his head. One of the small boats bore the marks of an ax.

"You fools!" yelled Edgar, passionately.

Disgusted and irritated beyond endurance, Edgar suddenly seemed to step out of his polite personality and take on the character of a berserk battler. Culture and courtesy were forgotten. The slim, cool young steamer officer, in one instant of sheer aggravation, became a wild-eyed terror, raging around the steamer with an iron bar in his hand.

He chased the battlers forward.

"Here, you—go back to the stoke-hole where you belong!" he bawled, to a fireman. "Get down from the crow's-nest, Krieg! You two men get out of the chart-house—quick!"

"Blah!" sneered a blowsy head, poked out from the wheel-house window.

Edgar leaped across the deck. He mounted the bridge. Swinging his bar wildly, he smashed in the door of the wheel-house, which was unlocked. He stormed past the wheel. Two terrified men rushed out by the opposite door.

Edgar swung his fist in a side-swipe which caught one of the men alongside the ear and knocked him down.

"He's crazy!" yelled the other fugitive, leaping down to the deck.

"He's sane!" grunted the chief, wiping his dirty hands on his trouser-legs and staring up at the bridge appreciatively. "This ends it!"

Edgar panted up to him. The chief made a sign of peace.

"Call your men below!" ordered Edgar. "I'll handle the rest!"

"Yes, sir," said the chief, respectfully. "Hey—Bill—Tom——!"

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Krieg was climbing down from the crow's-nest. Edgar let him alone for the time and started a grim search for the rest of his crew. They were hard to find. Suddenly yells and shouts arose from the other side of the ship, and Edgar started for that point.

A strange bass voice intruded itself into the proceedings.

"Hey!" bawled the voice. "What does this mean?"

Edgar, turning, saw the giant form of his bearded father approaching. The skipper wore only his night-shirt and pants. His face was pale. He leaned against the rail weakly to support himself. His eyes looked scared, as though his malady still overawed him; but his fog-horn voice had penetrative powers and the noises about the ship ceased as if by magic. Edgar turned and faced his father.

"It's mutiny, sir," he reported, tersely. "I was just starting to discipline the crew, sir."

The big skipper's jaw dropped.

"You?"

"Yes, sir," reported Edgar, coldly. "The second mate, Mr. Brill, insisted on going to Mazatlan. I insisted on Acapulco. There has been trouble, sir; but I have delivered the ship at Acapulco!"

"Wrugh!" grunted the skipper, feebly.

He passed a big hand over his pale face.

"Queer—queer—I forgot to tell you—well, never mind. There's two sides to the story. Yes. I'll hear both sides. Call Mr. Brill here!"

Mr. Brill was called. He told his story while wiping small stains from his face and clothes. Edgar also told his tale. The skipper, weak and scared by his strange malady, unwilling to risk another outburst of temper, gazed from one to the other thoughtfully. The skipper couldn't reprove Brill for looking out for the skipper's interests; and he couldn't reprimand Edgar for doing his plain duty. The skipper began to study the sunny blue Pacific.

"All right; we'll forget it," he decided, in a weak and husky voice. "It's misunderstanding. No blame. Let it go. We'll land that extra cargo at Mazatlan on our way back, Mr. Brill. Yes. That's better. We may make a little something out of it yet. Meantime we're in sight of Acapulco. Let the matter drop."

"Yes, sir," agreed Edgar, respectfully. "By the way, sir, I was offered a berth on a Pacific Mailer, some time ago. When we return home, I think I'll take it."

"Yes, yes," agreed the ex-terror, mildly. "Do as you please."

"Thank you, sir," said Edgar. "And by the way, sir, I might as well announce my marriage next month. I hadn't thought it best to tell you about it before, but——"

The captain showed a momentary wild gleam in his eyes; but he controlled himself.

"Yes," he muttered. "M'blessing. Yes."

The skipper turned and stared toward far horizons, the western horizons of the days of his youth, when Hell Roaring Jerry Strang was king of his domain by right of a glorious fist. His wistful eyes saw many pictures. Beyond the curve of the earth lay Tahiti, Samoa, Australia, Malaysia, China—the play-ground of his keels in the days that were past. Irrevocably past. He knew it now, and his face saddened.

"It's no life, the sea, when you get older," he decided, with strange meekness. "I'm glad you're marryin', Ed, at that. You'll have a place to settle down in. Yes, that's right. Sea life ain't so good when you get older."

The old ruffian kept staring at the horizon.

"It's too rough," he concluded.

There was a moment of silence. Then the chief came out of the engine-room doorway.

"Engines are burnin' up, sir," bawled the chief. "It's the oil, sir; it's gettin' thinner with every revolution. We'll just about make port!"

The captain stared at the chief.

"All right," agreed the skipper, with strange gentleness. "Nurse 'em! Slow down, if you think it best."

The captain turned and looked at Edgar. Suddenly the old ex-terror realized that Edgar had probably kept the ship out of an immense amount of trouble. Had she gone to Mazatlan, she never would have reached Acapulco; and an irate gentleman who chartered the ship could have sued her for heavy damages!

The skipper laid a mighty hand on his son's shoulder.

"Good work," grunted the skipper, in a husky voice. "You done your duty. That's the mark of a good sailor. Stick to the sea, m'boy; it's your sort of man that's needed!"

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Slants on LIFE

Plowman and Paralytic

by Bill Adams

YESTERDAY I took a ride to a town twenty-two miles to the nor'ard of home. A man in New York, one of you abominable, predacious editor sort of people, wants my photograph. Queer fellow, ain't he?

I have to go twenty-two miles to get my picture taken. The village where I live has no photographer.

Had got a couple of miles upon my way and was driving, as is my futile custom, at considerably above the legal speed, when I saw a man step to the highway and wave his arm to me to stop. I saw that he was a plowman; for his mules, four of them, all sweaty in the Spring warmth, stood close to the road. I am also a plowman—amongst other things. That's a pleasant life enough, a plowman's, in its way. I've followed 'em all. I reckon I know where sun and shadow lie. I like to walk slowly up and down for a ten-hour day with four mules strung out ahead of me between the orange-trees—*provided I am not too tied to my job.* That's what takes the sun from the life of a working-man; being tied to his job by grim necessity of poverty.

However—to return to my friend the plowman.

I had gone some distance past him before I was able to stop my car; then backing up, I met him, and looked into his face. He was a brown fellow. He was almost as brown as his mules, but his eyes were brighter than were their eyes—showing the light of a man's soul within. He wore an apologetic air. I presumed that he was in need of a wrench, or a screw-driver or some such thing wherewith to fix his plow.

"Mister—I hate to stop a feller; but I've a friend here as wants a ride," said he.

Out from behind an orange-tree there limped, all hunchy-backed, bent upon crutches, a very dreadful cripple. He was a little man, most bowed and very weary seeming. He climbed in silence into my comfortable car, seating himself in the back, laying his crutches down, staring at me from eyes that I, no matter how long I live, may never come to forget. They were large, deep sunken, frightened eyes—and yet, held hate, and misery most pitiful.

The plowman, leaning into my car, said to me, quietly:

"The pore lil' man's walked all this way out o' town. He says nine cars 'ave passed 'im by—think o' *that*, mister?"

I held out my hand. The plowman and I shook. Then I drove on.

Presently, turning, I asked my companion—

"How did it happen, son?"

"It's always been this way, mister," said he.

I looked inquiry at him.

"Spine—it keeps a-gettin' worse lately," said he.

"Hard to make a living, eh?" said I.

"I been shinin' folks' shoes, mister—but it gets to hurtin' me. It's hard," said he.

"How far do you go?" said I.

"I'm going to the county hospital, mister. They'd ought to take me in, didn't they?"

We went on, in silence.

Presently my voyager spoke again.

"A feller gets awful down-hearted sometimes," said he.

"I know," said I. "I've been about a bit, myself."

I took him to the town where I was to have my picture taken for an editor in New York.

Ah, if God sees the picture upon each man's soul. As indeed He does—what shall our verdict be? When, thus, we pass the crutch-bearers on the highway?

The plowman befriended him, on sight. God bless the plowman.

"I made him stay right here. I told him I'd make some feller with a car stop," had said the plowman.

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Standish of the Star Y

Conclusion — by GORDON YOUNG

Author of "On the Waterfront," "Oystkers!" etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form.

"STAY where you are. Situation here worse than ever. Really dangerous to come. Am writing you in detail—C. C. Renalds."

Norman Standish, back East after a trip abroad, perused his uncle's telegram and frowned. After his mother had died, leaving the Star Y ranch to his half-brother Bob and himself, he had decided to inquire how matters stood at Martinez. This was his answer. It took him two minutes to make up his mind. Arrived at Martinez he put up at the Davis's, as the one hotel had been called when Colonel Standish lived and Robert and Norman were boys. Quite inadvertently he learned from the bartender, Welch, that Renalds had acquired a black name in the town. Therefore Norman felt it would be best to conceal his identity a while longer and see what else he could discover.

In the barroom Norman listened as two "nesters" talked with Welch. His heart turned to ice as he heard that Robert had been found dead in the desert with a bullet-hole in his forehead. He also heard that Robert had been against Renalds' tactics at the Star Y and as a consequence nephew and uncle had had many quarrels.

"Who done it, you reckon?" asked the younger nester.

His tone implied that he had suspicions of his own.

"Who done it!" the bartender repeated contemptuously. "I allow that no man what's got half my sense, the which I ain't braggin' is overmuch, won't make no guesses out loud. Somebody seems to be doin' a ——'s plenty not more'n a hundred miles or so from here. But I ain't mentionin' of no names."

As he listened Norman heard that Renalds was waging a merciless warfare against the nesters who sought to make a living in his section. Renalds had gathered to the bosom of the Star Y a gang of hard-riding, reckless-shooting cowboys who would stop at nothing.

That evening, Standish still having managed to conceal the fact that he was the sole owner of the Star Y, his uncle's ranch hands, headed by Harvey, the foreman, came in. They manifested much wary curiosity as to Standish's identity but he held them off until the appearance of Buck Blevins. Blevins, an untamed specimen, forced Standish into an argument. Just as the cowboy aimed a blow at the Easterner, Keyes, the telegraph operator, shouted:

"Buck—Buck Blevins! Don't! That's Renalds' nephew."

When Blevins had drawn back, abashed, Harvey stepped forward and questioned Standish. Then, when Standish admitted that he was Colonel Standish's son, the ranch foreman made arrangements for him to go out to the Star Y on the following morning. He also announced that Renalds was absent from the ranch on business.

Later, in the barroom, Standish heard of the disappearance of Old Sawyer, an old-time Westerner, who had been Colonel Standish's friend as well as Bob's, and no particular admirer of Renalds. There was much doubt over the fact that Sawyer was still alive.

THE next morning Simmons, the cowboy dedicated to the job of seeing Standish safely out to the Star Y, appeared. Through a ruse Simmons and the blacksmith, "Blackie," pretended that the horse Standish was to ride was unbroken. Sensing the hoax, and his pride hurt, Standish forced the horse into a wild frenzy, and was thrown. He won the respect of the two men when he insisted on riding the horse to the Star Y, after the animal had again quieted.

"Standish of the Star Y," copyright, 1923, by Gordon Young.

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AS THEY rode along and Simmons became more communicative, Standish learned something of the relationship between "Red" Allister and Black Renalds. It seemed that when Renalds had agreed to operate the Star Y for Standish's mother until Bob and himself were of age, Renalds had been forced to leave his own property, the 44 Circle. During his absence he had installed Allister as his foreman and, as Simmons pointed out—with his tongue in his cheek—there had been a notable decrease in the size of the Star Y stock, and a corresponding increase in the 44 Circle's since this arrangement.

What interested Standish more than anything, however, was the fact that "Fuzzy" Butler, the man generally thought to have been Bob Standish's murderer, was a tool of Allister's. Then too, as Simmons pointed out, Allister had been no friend of Bob Standish's.

On the way to the Star Y, Simmons and Standish stopped off for a while at Reddin's road-house. Here Standish found a black horse tethered and apparently the property of one "Buckaroo," a reckless individual, inside. While they were resting Standish inadvertently learned that the horse belonged to McCullough, a neighboring rancher. With the help of Simmons, Standish secured control of the horse, intending to return it.

At Reddin's he also met a consumptive youth named Barney. Barney had known Bob Standish and confided to Standish that Renalds with the aid of Allister was driving the nesters out of the territory by illegal means.

As they were leaving Reddin's, Standish and Simmons were fired upon by the disgruntled Buckaroo and his companion. After a short exchange of pistol shots the two rustlers were killed, but not before Barney was also fatally injured. Before they left, Standish heard from Reddin that Frazier, a nester, had been burned out by unknown men. Standish was indignant, and Simmons tried to soothe him.

"Well," said Standish, "you can go on to the ranch if you like. I—I am going to Frazier's."

They found the Frazier family with no property left but a few provisions and a covered wagon, but stanch in their determination not to be driven out. The family consisted of Frazier, his wife, Wally their son, and a sweet-faced adopted daughter, Jess. "Maw" Frazier told Standish that his brother had been a friend of theirs, and then proceeded to enlighten him further as to the high-handed methods of Renalds and Allister. When Standish left he promised to send them relief.

ARRIVED at the Star Y, Standish was approached by a reckless youth named Bud Russell, who had been Bob Standish's best friend. He said that not only had "Fuzzy" Butler been responsible for the shooting of Bob Standish, but that Butler had also paid for his crime. He declined to discuss the particulars of the case for the present.

Trouble developed when Harvey, the Star Y foreman, refused to obey all of Standish's instructions. Harvey announced his opinion frankly.

"Young man, at first I took a likin' to you. But I haven't any now."

"I haven't any dislike of you at all, Mr. Harvey. But I am going to have my way in the management of this ranch. Do you still refuse to tell me who burned out Frazier's?"

"I do."

Finding he could do nothing with the foreman, Standish set the matter aside for the present and gave orders for Buck Blevins to be dispatched with relief to the Frazier household, as well as Mrs. Welch, in Martinez.

It was becoming evident every day that trouble was developing, not only with the nesters but the rustlers as well. A few days after Standish's arrival several bullets sped into Star Y territory.

THE events of the next couple of days occurred with bewildering rapidity. Standish witnessed a gun duel in the hills with a rustler who managed to escape; he received a wire from his uncle saying he was returning; an eastbound train ten miles out of Martinez was robbed of twenty thousand dollars in gold. But the biggest shock came when he learned that in an effort to rid the country of the nesters Red Allister, assisted by Star Y cowpunchers and neighboring ranchers, was going to stampede thousands of cattle over nester territory.

Riding on the outskirts of the Star Y corrals Standish found Bud Russell, driving Star Y cows before him, headed for the hills. Standish whipped out his pistol.

"Bud Russell," he shouted, "up with your hands!"

Russell, finding himself caught, grinned broadly and endeavored to stay his captor's wrath. When Standish accused him of stealing Star Y cattle he denied it.

"I ain't stealin'. Me an' another feller has just sorta gone in pardnership with you—same as Red Allister has!"

"Same as ——! What do you mean, Russell?" Standish shouted angrily.

Russell explained that it was a well-known fact that Black Renalds and Allister operated on a partnership basis, and that for every nester Allister drove from the country Renalds gave him ten Star Y cows—never cows from the 44 Circle, his own ranch. He also stated with conviction that if Standish cared to go down to Ameco Point he would find his own cows being branded with the Lazy A.

"Me an' the feller I'm workin' with, we don't change no brands," Russell went on; "we're jest findin' a new range for Star Y cows. An' I bet if you was to go over and have a talk with Allister that you'd help me drive off your own cows."

When he had permitted Russell to go on Standish spurred his horse to Ameco Point and found that conditions were as he had stated. He endeavored to make the men desist from the branding, and when he was attacked he killed one of them. Boiling with anger, he rode back to the ranch and found Harvey.

The foreman told Standish that he was acting according to Renalds' orders and that while he was foreman of the Star Y he would take orders from no one but Renalds. At the point of a pistol Standish demanded his resignation—and got it. Then, realizing that there was some good stuff in the foreman and that the blame actually rested with Renalds, Standish succeeded in winning the foreman over to his side. This done, both men set out to find Red Allister.

In a crowd of cowpunchers they found Allister. He regarded Standish with amusement. When Standish asked him what right he had to take over Star Y cattle for himself Allister insolently suggested that he take the matter up with Renalds. When Standish replied heatedly Allister's face drew into a threatening frown.

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"I wouldn't take talk like that from any man but for your uncle being a friend of mine, an'——"

The sentence was never finished. Standish broke in with a tone of fury—

"You never showed any such consideration as that for my brother—you hired Fuzzy Butler to shoot him in the back!"

Allister's hand snapped to his pistol, but before he could draw Simmons and Harvey had him covered. Then, taking the bull by the horns, Harvey stepped forward, accused Allister of stealing Star Y cows and offered to shoot the matter out with him. And Red Allister, long feared as a two-gun man, quit cold—turned with his tail between his legs and fled.

Having convinced the Star Y cowpunchers by now that he alone would give them orders, Standish rode to McCullough to warn him that the stampede was about to take place, and that it was too late to do anything but flee.

At McCullough's ranch he found Bud Russell and Old Man Sawyer, who had been believed dead. Kate McCullough, Mac's granddaughter, informed him that she had been responsible for Russell's theft of the Star Y cattle and that she was trying to save them from Allister. She also said she had married his brother Bob Standish six months before.

As Standish made his way to McCullough he saw nesters on all sides, women, children and men—and every one preparing to weather the stampede that would soon be upon them.

WHEN Standish had convinced McCullough that his sympathy was with the nesters he was allowed to aid in the fight against the stampede. Headed by McCullough, and carrying long strips of white cloth with which to turn aside the cattle, Standish rode out.

The stampede came on like a whirlwind. A long fire-line had been stretched across the path of the oncoming cattle but it looked for a while as if even this would fail to stop them. Caught in the center of the plunging and terror-maddened animals, Standish found himself riding beside a strange man. When this man's horse had gone down, trampled, the stranger climbed up behind Standish. After a prolonged fight when the cattle had been swept aside, the newcomer struck a match and held it to his face.

"Know me?"

Standish stared.

"You—you—it can't be you!"

In the flickering light Standish had recognized his brother Bob. Back at the ranch there was a picture of his father—and this man was too much like Colonel Standish to be other than his son.

Bob explained that he had tired of being tracked by men hired to kill him. One day he had caught Fuzzy Butler and they had fought it out. When he had killed Butler it occurred to Bob that he would change clothes and saddles with him. Weeks later when the unrecognizable body was found alongside of Bob's saddle it was decided that Bob had been killed. It was then that Bob, assisted by Bud Russell and Kate McCullough, began to drive off Star Y cows into the hills.

McCullough believed that Allister, in failing with the stampede, had played his last card. He told Standish that it would be a good plan for him to meet Renalds when he came into the station—and so forestall any treachery on Allister's part.

On his way to Martinez Standish stopped for the night at Reddin's road-house. Here he found Buck Blevins, drunk and armed with a letter from Allister to Renalds. Without disturbing Blevins from his drunken stupor Standish intercepted the letter.

In Martinez Standish learned that the railroad authorities and the sheriff were looking for Blevins and a man named Mentone. It was now known that the two men had been responsible for the recent train robbery.

Realizing that Blevins would be caught unless warned in time, and harboring no grudge against the cowpuncher, Standish told one of Blevins' friends where he was. A messenger was dispatched to warn him.

Black Renalds showed no surprize when Norman greeted him at the train. He shook hands and questioned Standish in monosyllables. As they rode along and Standish's story unfolded Renalds began to lose his temper.

"Ride on—ahead of me, or behind!" said Renalds angrily. "We'll take this matter up again at the ranch."

Riding a mile ahead of Renalds, Standish came to Reddin's again. Blevins had fled, but one of Allister's men was waiting, prepared to engage Standish in a gun-duel. In the fight that followed Standish killed him, and while the place was in an uproar, Renalds entered. Standish ordered Reddin to get out of the country.

"Do I have to get out?" Reddin asked hoarsely, staring at Renalds.

"You do," he answered coldly.

XXXIV

NORMAN went early to bed, but felt that he would not be able to sleep. Kaleidoscopic fancies shifted through his mind. His uncle's strange, saturnine, impressive bearing had made a powerful impression. Toina's fierce vagaries, more like madness than drunkenness, left his attempts to analyze them bewildered. Jeff Jones's forcing of the quarrel, "under orders," and Reddin's wretchedly apoplectic puffing and fears, gave a nightmarish tinge to his thoughts.

But he was very tired, and was soon asleep.

He was awakened shortly by loud voices; confused, strident, hoarse. He raised up on an elbow, listening.

A woman was swearing horribly, and at the top of her voice; another voice broke in bellowing—that was Reddin's. Then Clara, still imperturbable, but high pitched, spoke soothingly.

Norman paused in his impulse to get up, light his candle, and perhaps make a protest against this disturbance.

Then he heard Renalds say—

"Stop this racket—all of you!"

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Silence followed, and was broken a moment later by rapid mumbling as they finished off their quarreling in tones low enough not to be disturbing.

Norman struck a match and looked at his watch. He had not been in bed twenty minutes. It was ten of nine. Norman sank back, feeling dead for sleep, but he lay awake. He closed his eyes and tried to shut out thoughts and fancies. The voices died away in the hall. Heavy slow steps passed his door—Reddin's.

"What a brute!" Norman thought.

He finally got to sleep again, then was awakened with a start. Some one was beating on his door.

"What is it?"

"Get up, Norman. Reddin has been killed."

"Good Lord—who?"

But his uncle had left the door.

Norman lighted his candle, slipped into shirt, trousers and boots, and carrying his candle for a light, hurried into the hall. The tramp of feet and sound of voices came up from the barroom.

He hurried down. Four or five people were there, most of them half-dressed or less. One lamp had been lighted. Limpy, in nothing but the underwear in which he had been sleeping, held the lamp unsteadily and turned his face from side to side, his eyes rolling.

Renalds, fully dressed except for a collar and the long coat, bent down beside the lumpish body, in a flannel nightgown, on the floor. A nickel-plated revolver lay near it.

In a chair at a table close by, Toina, with dress half-open and hair down, leaned on her elbows, her hands in her hair, and she gazed wildly about, drunken, terrified.

"Will they hang me? Will they hang me?" she called shrilly toward whoever looked at her.

Clara went to her, put her arms about her, told her not to be afraid.

Mexicans from outside were coming in, shy, curious, quiet, watchful; now and then speaking rapidly to each other in soft tones, pressing up to peer over shoulders at the big lumpish form, wrapped in a nightgown, on the floor.

"Take the lamp, Norman," said Renalds.

"Yoh take it, sah," Limpy added eagerly, giving it to Norman. "Ah leave here jes' as soon as Ah git my brekfus', Ah do!"

Limpy was shivering. He shifted about uneasily. One leg was shorter than the other.

"Hold it so I can see, Norman. That's better. Twice—and—yes, in the back!"

"I didn't do it! I didn't do it!" shrieked Toina.

"That's Barney's revolver, I think," said Norman, as his uncle picked up the nickel-plated revolver.

"Reddin was once a good man," said Renalds, thoughtfully looking down.

"What is to be done with her?" asked Norman.

"I don't know," Renalds answered quietly.

He looked toward the wretched girl, who pulled Clara more tightly to her; and Clara spoke soothingly, calling her "dearie," "honey," "child."

"If it had been from the front, but from behind—I don't know."

"Come on, honey. You come with me an' go to bed. Nobody's going to hurt you," said Clara, pulling at Toina.

"He was going to kill me!" Toina cried. "He tried to drive me out!"

She looked wildly about for a pitying face.

"You go with her," said Renalds. "And everybody get out."

The Mexicans began to withdraw, but reluctantly, with faces over their shoulders, still curious.

Norman placed the lamp on a table.

"Come on, dearie," said Clara.

Toina arose, sat down, got up again, stumbled and staggered, and was almost carried by Clara.

"He hated you—he hated you!" Toina cried hopefully as she passed Renalds, but he did not answer.

Clara got her out of the room. From the stairs they heard the screaming question, "Will they hang me?" and Clara's voice answered gently: "Of course not. Everybody's glad. Come on, honey."

Norman, his uncle and Limpy remained.

"Ah ain't goin' ter bed," Limpy explained. "Ah ain't goin' nowhere. Ah'm goin' to light out foh town jes' as soon as Ah kin. Ah wouldn't have come here a-tall 'cept I come ter tell Buck to git out. Ah ain't goin' ter wait foh my brekfus'—Ah ain't goin' ter be hungry!"

"You can't remain in here—unless you want to be locked up with——"

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Renalds pointed.

"Ah'm goin', sah—Ah's gone!"

Limpy hurried out with hobbling stride.

Renalds turned to the lamp, lowered the wick slightly, looked down at the body, then at Norman.

"You told them in town that Buck was here?"

"Yes. I told just one person. George Welch."

"You knew he would send Buck warning, did you?"

"Yes."

"Why did you do it?"

"I don't know just why. He's young. He isn't a bad fellow. I don't believe he shot that express messenger, and in a way I was to blame."

"But he didn't know it was you who sent the warning?"

"No. That would have looked too much as though I was trying to make friends with him. He, Reddin, everybody here, thought I had spread the news in town. Thought I did it to help catch him—thought I was afraid of him."

"I see," said Renalds thoughtfully.

The big room, with its oppressively low ceiling was quiet and, except for the circular glow around the lamp, dark. Faces pressed against the windows. The Mexicans, still curious, were watching. Their low voices could be heard vaguely.

"It isn't twelve o'clock yet. I am going back to bed."

"There seems nothing else to do. But I don't know about sleeping. Who was Jeff Jones, Mr. Renalds?"

"One of my men. And a good shot."

"He shot at me from in front of Reddin. I suppose that is what made him miss."

"Perhaps so. I saw it—all."

"And heard?"

"Yes, part of it."

"Then you saw that he was trying to force a quarrel on me?" asked Norman, with an effort to avoid mentioning Allister. "Why do you think he did it?"

"I am not in the habit of telling what I think, or—" he added significantly—"of explaining what I do. Good night, Norman."

With that, he left the room.

Norman stared after him, half-angry, embarrassed, wholly puzzled. Then he slipped the heavy bars across the outside doors, hesitated about blowing out the lamp, turned it still lower, and went to his room.

This time it was very hard to go to sleep. Minutes, like hours, went by restlessly. The house remained quiet. At last he dozed off into disturbing dreams.

Yet, once again before sun-up, he was awakened, and this time by a hallooing and pounding as if a dozen men were beating on the doors.

"What's the matter? Everybody dead around here!"

"We'll wake 'em!"

Guns began to go off, their reports mingling with shrill *yi-ee-i-oh's*, loud enough to have dimmed Gabriel's horn.

Norman thrust his head from a window, shouting—

"You—Bob—Bob Standish—Russell—stop that!"

"Hello there, kid! We got one of 'em awake!"

"Stop it! Reddin was killed last night—Mr. Renalds is here. Quit your yelling! What are you doing here anyhow?"

"Reddin? Who got him?"

"Toina."

"Good for her," said Bud Russell.

"Say, Norman," Bob Standish asked with sudden quietness of tone, "you seen anything of Jeff Jones?"

"Yes—last night."

"And?— Go on—what happened?"

"It's all right, Bob."

"You got him?"

"Yes."

"Boy, you're a wonder! ——'s been poppin' down our way. Allister or a couple of his skunks have stole Jess Frazier—we heard Jeff had been sent to get you, an' Bud an' I have been hittin' the dust since noon yesterday. We thought maybe you an' Mr. Renalds had stayed over in town an' we would catch Jeff here. Come on down!"

Again Norman hastily dressed, this time to hat and holster, and hurried into the hall.

Renalds was standing in the door of his room, again half-dressed. His dark form and face were hardly visible except for the white shirt that somehow seemed to give outline, or suggest it, to his body.

"What's the matter now, Norman?" he asked evenly, though with impatience.

"Bob and Bud Russell heard that Jeff had been sent to force a quarrel on me, sir. They took to his trail and just got in. They say somebody has kidnaped Jess Frazier—the girl, you know. They

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thought you and I might have stopped overnight in town—that's why they made such a racket," he explained a little apologetically.

Norman went down the stairs and out through the front door.

Bob at once gripped him roughly, shook him, shouted at him, pounded him affectionately, said that Jeff Jones wore three notches on his gun, cursed Red Allister, and demanded a drink.

"But Reddin's in there—on the floor—in his nightgown."

"I reckon I'll take some water. How about you, Bud?"

"I'll play I'm a hoss too," said Russell.

"Come on, let's put up the horses—an' tell us about it," said Bob, gripping Norman's shoulder and pulling him along. "You are sure one trouble-maker, kid. How'd you ever catch Jeff asleep?"

They watered the tired horses and turned them into the corral, then squatted down by the corral and pulled at Norman with questions.

Then Bud said:

"The Fraziers and Jacksons were drivin' home—over to the Jacksons'. They buried Wally over to Mac's. Poor Maw, she hasn't said ten words since that night. Well, they were drivin' over to the Jacksons', turkeys an' all in the wagon. Two men rode up, and it looked like they wasn't going to pay any attention to the wagon—nobody's been botherin' the nesters that pulled out for home. But when these fellows got up to the wagon they jerked out their guns. Paw Frazier had his rifle across his knee, but they got the drop.

" 'Nobody's goin' to get hurt,' they said, 'if you folks stay quiet. We want the girl. We're goin' get even up with that young Standish. Come on, sis,' they told her.

"Jess made a powerful racket, fell down in the bottom of the wagon and said they could just shoot for all she cared. Mrs. Jackson—know how fat she is?—she jumped up and down and said too that they could just shoot! Maw Frazier tried to get the rifle away from Paw, but one of the men said—

" 'Frazier, if you give her that rifle, we'll shoot *her!*'

"Then they said—

" 'We mean business, but we'll begin on the hosses.'

"They shot a horse.

"Then Jess jumped up and said that she would go, that she wouldn't have anybody hurt on her account. Her folks tried to hold her in the wagon, but she got away, climbed down, then went and climbed up on a horse behind one of the men, an' they rode off with her.

"The Jackson boy, Pete, he took one of the horses that was being led behind the wagon and come jumpin' into Mac's just about three minutes after Harvey had sent a fellow in to tell us that Jeff Jones was out looking for you—had headed for our ranch—knew you were going in. They must have heard about it through some nester talk.

"Mac and everybody lit out after them fellows that took Jess, but they can't follow no tracks with the country all cut up by cows and horses like it is. Bud and I started over your trail, knowing that somewhere along the line we'd cut Jeff's tracks.

"There's already been three or four shootin's on the range over Allister. I hear he's lit out. But you can hear anything. Everybody is sure rubbing it in to the 44 Circle bunch about Allister and the way he crawled. They ain't none too wild in love with Allister, but if anybody gets to hintin' around that the 44 Circle is all like him, that fellow is due for some lead hornets about his ears. That right, Bud?"

"Shore is," said Bud.

"Who were the men that stole Jess Frazier?"

"Nobody knows 'em by sight. May not have been Allister himself, but none of the Jacksons or Fraziers know him by sight. Least the Jackson boy said so. But it sounds like Allister, saying they were taking her to even up on you."

"I can't see why they think that about me," said Norman impatiently.

"Listen, kid. They can't figure any other reason why you'd take up with nesters. It's sort o' unnatural in a cowman. With me it was different. They thought I did it part to spite Renalds, and then too they knew all over that I was in love with Kate. If some *hombre* ever kidnaped Kate, wouldn't he think he'd got hold of a full-sized grizzly!"

"Shore would!" said Bud Russell.

"Say, Norman, have you had any kind of talk with Renalds yet?" asked Bob.

"Listen, Bob. Is there any possible way you can think of that Renalds may be right?"

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"Nary a way. It's told on the range that he gives Allister ten cows every time he makes a nester jump—but it's Star Y cows he's been giving for nesters on the 44 Circle range. And I'll bet a pair of spurs to a toothpick if there was any such deal that Allister coaxed the nesters in, then scared 'em out—maybe by hirin' 'em to go. A rattlesnake coiled up 'round a prickly pear an' hatched Red Allister. He's another fellow that totes two guns when he don't know how to handle one proper. Never saw two guns tied to Jim Harvey, did you? Nor to old Mac? No. An' Renalds, he never carries any 'cept if there is some particular job on hand."

"He appeared really hurt when I practically accused him of taking Star Y cattle."

"He never 'peared particular hurt when I used to accuse him, right up to his face. But then your mother was livin', so it didn't make any difference what I said. But now, for you—sure he'd feel hurt, powerful bad hurt. There's just two things I'll give the old man credit for. He ain't afraid of any two men on legs, and when he gets ready to talk, he speaks right out loud so everybody can hear, an' his favorite remark is, 'It's none o' your —— business!' He's told me that so many times I wake up in my sleep a-saying it.

"I asked him onct—

" 'You trying to drive me off the range?'

"He said—

" 'Do you think if I tried to drive you off the range that you wouldn't go?'

" 'Not unless you hauled my carcass off in the chuck wagon,' I told him.

"He said—

" 'If I wanted you off the range I'd just as soon you went that way as any other.'

"Then next month he raised my pay.

"I don't savvy him. I sure don't. He said onct—

" 'Bob, if you ever got some sense you might be my foreman.'

" 'I wouldn't be your foreman—not unless you was paralyzed,' I told him.

"Oh we've exchanged remarks frequently that would have made funerals between other men!"

Dawn had come, and the light showed Bud Russell soundly sleeping, head forward, his back against the corral.

"Here!" shouted Bob, shaking him. "This won't do. Think I'm goin' let you do all the snoozin'? Wake up. We'll eat, then look for the hay."

"Then," said Norman, "I think we'll be riding back toward McCullough's to see what has become of Jess."

Russell grinned sleepily.

"She is a pretty little thing," said Bob.

"Now just stop that," Norman answered. "I don't care any more about her than you do. But I'll make trouble for any man that hurts her."

"And do you want to know what Kate said to me about you? You tell him, Bud. It makes me sad."

"Go ahead," said Bud Russell. "You like to talk."

"She said to me, when Bud and I was jumpin' our hosses there at Mac's—she said:

" 'Bob, if anything happens to Norman, don't you ever come near me again; but if anything happens to you, I'm going to marry *him*. So you can be just as careless of yourself as you like!' "

"I suppose I'd have something to say about that," ventured Norman uncomfortably.

"No you wouldn't, kid. Not with Kate, no!" Bob answered proudly. "She is a real woman. Always has her own way. I don't like these wishy-washy women—they're like hosses anybody can ride."

PEOPLE were astir about the place. There was the odor of burning wood as the cook got a fire going in his stove. The Mexicans came out, speaking quietly, smiling shyly.

Curiosity drew Bob and young Russell into the barroom where the lamp still burned like a dim taper to ease the ghost of the newly dead.

"What's to be done with the girl, I wonder?" said Russell.

Then they heard a step behind them. Renalds, tall, quiet, impenetrably somber, appeared. He was dressed, the grip was in his hand. He glanced from Russell to Bob, and said—

"Well, Robert, you are looking very hearty for a man so long reported dead."

Bob smiled a little awkwardly.

"I'm feelin' fine, thank you."

"Did you see any of the San Carlos papers lately?" Renalds inquired.

"I ain't been reading much in the papers lately. Was there something about me?"

The metropolitan San Carlos had a

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small newspaper that managed to crawl from the press once a week.

"Not precisely. Here is a clipping."

Renalds drew out his letters from his pocket, sorted them and finding the envelop he wanted, opened it and handed Bob a clipping:

One Thousand Dollars Reward
for information leading
to the capture of
Fuzzy Butler
Reported to be heading for Texas.
C. C. RENALDS.

"Well, I'm sure deeply obliged to you. I—well, Fuzzy he never got to Texas, Mr. Renalds."

"Yes, I know. You gave him a fair show, I hear."

There was a trace of half-amused skepticism in his tone.

"I didn't jump the draw on him, but he knew I'd get him. That's the reason your bad man always shoots in the back—if he can. He didn't have no more show than a jack has of chewin' up a coyote!"

"You always manage to do everything in the most foolish way possible, don't you? I am going on to the ranch," said Renalds, returning the clipping methodically to the envelop. "You will probably want some sleep. Then you and Norman come to the ranch. I want to have a few words with you, there."

"Why not have 'em right here now, Mr. Renalds," said Bob.

"You'll understand why I prefer the ranch house, when you come."

"All right, we'll be there with bells on. And by the way, while I was dead I run off a hundred an' fifty head o' cattle and some o' old Thunder's grandsons. Do I get to keep 'em?"

"You do not," said Renalds evenly, without anger and humor.

"But you told me onct anybody that could get away with 'em——"

"Unhung, yes," Renalds interrupted, his dark eyes impenetrably steady.

"Anytime I get hung there's goin' be some funerals dottin' the landscape—particular when I rustled my own cows!"

"Robert, you are going to bring those cattle back, and those horses. You are going to put those horses in the pasture, then come to me with your hat in your hand, and say that you want to apologize——"

"Oh no—no," said Bob, shaking his head emphatically. "Not me, no. I never take off my hat when I apologize!"

"Yes. Yes, you will."

"Bet you I don't. Bet you my hundred an' fifty Star Y's to that many 44 Circle's I don't!"

Renalds walked away without answering. After breakfast he mounted his horse and rode on. A few minutes later Julio, who had arrived the night before about an hour after Mr. Renalds, hitched up and followed, but left for Norman the Standish horse he had been leading.

Bob and Bud went up to the same room and turned into the same bed, having left word for Norman to call them by noon.

XXXV

REDDIN'S body lay untouched on the floor. No one had entered the barroom after Bob and Bud Russell went out excepting Clara, who appeared to have no excitable feelings. She came to get a drink for Toina, who was moaning that she did not want to live, which Clara knew meant that she wanted half a tumbler of whisky.

Norman, in the kitchen, spoke to the cook about having Reddin buried.

"The boys 'll 'tend to him when they've done their chores an' had breakfast," said the cook, who was a half-breed Mexican.

The old broken-down miner who did puttering work about the place came into the kitchen, pulled out his pipe, filled it, sat down in a chair, leaned back and spoke slowly:

"I've knowed Reddin off an' on for twenty-five years, an' knowed of him afore that. In his day he was a fine young feller, an' warn't scared of nothin'. I seen him shoot it out onct with two men an' never turn a ha'r. But he got to tendin' bar an' gittin' fat, an' his nature it changed too. He took up with wimen an' you see what he come to. One of 'em shot 'im in the back."

The old fellow smoked on in silence.

"I wonder who will get this place now," said the cook.

"Don't you think it would be better to bury him before we talk about dividing his property?" suggested Norman.

Presently a party of horsemen rode in. It was the sheriff from San Carlos, who looked after what law there was in a territory

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as large as the entire State of Massachusetts. He now came with the two railroad officers, and three or four other men gathered in as deputies. They had returned to Martinez late the night before from an unsuccessful search for Mentone's cache, and hearing from Welch—who knew that Buck had already been warned—that Buck had been seen at Reddin's, got some sleep, then rode early and hard.

The sheriff leaped from his horse and was the first to enter the house, and into the barroom, where he stopped suddenly.

"Holy sufferin' thunder!" he shouted, bending over the rigid body. "Reddin's done for!"

The sheriff was not a big man, but he had a big mustache and quick sharp eyes. No one had a great amount of respect for him, though he was not disliked. He was brave enough, but not conspicuous in a country where sooner or later every man had to show what metal was in his backbone, and to get out if it was deficient in iron; and where the man who was not able to look after himself nevertheless had too much respect to ask help of a sheriff. Besides, the nesters, who might have been the most grateful for his help, knew that he was not likely to do anything that would offend the cattle men. And he was about as ignorant as a man could be of the law, its formula, and the respective duties of peace officers; but he was headstrong and outspoken.

Norman came in. Already the men, the sheriff with them, had gathered at one end of the bar, while one of the party behind the bar placed glasses and a bottle.

"We've rode long an' hard," said the sheriff. "Join us?"

Norman declined. The sheriff eyed him closely for a moment, then let his inhospitality pass.

Norman told what he knew. When they heard that it was a woman that had done the shooting, the men looked from one to another awkwardly, and had another drink.

"The only thing to do," said the sheriff, pulling at one end of his long mustache, "is to get a jury right now an' try 'er. There's a justice at Martinez, but he's down with rheumatics. Besides, I've got the right to hear the case, an' if I ain't I'll do it anyhow!"

He banged his hand forcibly on the bar.

Norman went up-stairs and awakened his brother and Russell.

"Now listen," said Bob Standish as he stamped into his boots. "We're goin' be on that jury. Toina she never liked me, but this trial's goin' be fair an' square, and the fellow that votes her guilty is goin' hear from me!"

"Me too!" said Bud Russell, examining the chambers of his gun.

"But she *is* guilty!" Norman exclaimed.

"That don't make no difference," spoke up Bud Russell. "She's a woman."

"The only thing you can do," Norman suggested ironically, "is to find that she did it in self-defense."

"Great head, you've got!" Bob shouted, slapping the great head approvingly. "Reddin was trying to choke her an'——"

"But in the back!" said Norman.

"Maybe Reddin had his arms back like this"—Bud Russell illustrated as he spoke—"and was tryin' to throw her over his head."

"Another great head!" shouted Bob, and immediately pounded it.

THE trial was held in the barroom. Reddin's body remained on the floor, though a blanket had been laid over it. Chairs were ranged against the wall.

Toina came down. She had made her toilet with some care, but there was nothing of beauty in her drawn, haggard face. One cheek was purplish with bruises. Clara held her arm, and the sheriff greeted them with a low bow, removing his hat.

"Hats off!" was passed in a hurried undertone from man to man, but the hats came off before the words had been twice spoken.

The sheriff placed chairs at a table, pushing the chairs under Clara and Toina as they sat down; then standing beside the table he knocked for order with the muzzle of his revolver, and said:

"This here court is now in order. And we're goin' to have a reg'lar jury an' do justice. I'll appoint the jury now. Mr. James an' Mr. Thompson"—they were the special officers of the railroad—"Bud Russell, you an' the Standish boys. Mary Peterson, you, Clary, Tim an' Watson there——"

And so he picked the jurymen; then, finding that there were not enough white men, he debated openly with Mr. James about putting on Mexicans.

"I don't think that'd be reg'lar," insisted the sheriff. "I never seen a Mexican on a

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jury. An' you ten men can try any case."

The men appointed to the jury solemnly filed to their seats.

Norman was amazed. The proceedings were flagrantly farcical, but withal overhung by the most impressive gravity of manner. No one seemed to realize that it was a farce.

"Now," said the sheriff. "Reddin is dead. Lady, you tell 'em just what happened."

Toina looked up, frightened.

"Go on, honey," said Clara.

"Don't be scared, lady," said the sheriff. "Tell them, honey."

In a frightened low voice Toina spoke:

"I was down here last night and Reddin came in. He swore at me. He said I had to get out of his house—that I could sleep under a cottonwood for all he cared. But I had to get out. He said he was going to get a bottle and beat me to death if I didn't get out. I must have shot him, I don't remember. Everybody says I did. Clara told me this morning that I did. I don't remember."

She folded her hands across her face and fell forward on the table, trembling and crying.

"Were there any witnesses? Did any of you fellers see anything?" demanded the sheriff of the Mexicans who stood along the wall.

They shook their heads, smiling propitiously.

"Well, gentlemen," said the sheriff, addressing the jury. "You've heard the evidence. It shows that the lady didn't know nothin' about it until this mornin', so I don't see how under the law we can hold her guilty. I move she ain't guilty. Mr. James, what do you say?"

Mr. James, who was looking for a train robber within the sheriff's far-flung country and needed his good will, quietly answered—

"Not guilty."

"Mr. Thompson?"

"Not guilty."

"You other fellows, what'd you say?"

"Not guilty!" answered a low chorus.

Norman remained silent. He felt a sense of outrage, not because he wanted Toina punished—he did not want that; but it seemed utterly futile to have hope of law ever being abroad in the unsettled land when its solemn routine and weighty dignity was so lightly disregarded. He knew that it was the incomprehensible respect of these men for a woman in distress—even a low creature like Toina—that had hurried them on to a veritable burlesque of gallantry in the presence of the man she had murdered.

"Lady," said the sheriff, "it's a pleasure to tell you you ain't guilty; but if I was you, I wouldn't do such a thing again!"

Nobody smiled, unless possibly Mr. James and Mr. Thompson behind their hands, thinking of what an amusing experience they would have to tell sheriffs and judges when they returned to their more orderly communities.

Norman glanced along the row of faces. They were set soberly, sincerely. Even his brother, born and raised on the range, seemed to have no realization of the humorless travesty.

Toina smiled weakly, still half-afraid; she tried to say, "I thank you," but the words failed on her quivering lips, and falling forward on her folded arms she began to cry violently.

XXXVI

REDDIN was buried by the Mexicans. The old broken-down miner and Clara, the emotionless, were all of his friends who went to the grave. Norman could see the men tumbling the dirt in on the body out behind one of the adobe sheds where there were many nameless graves, while the sheriff and his men were busy getting out their horses to ride in search of Buck Blevins.

The sheriff was profanely exasperated at what he called Mentone's trick in having given the railroad officers the wrong information about his cache. The railroad had offered five thousand reward for the train robbers and half of that was on Buck's head; and, he felt, Buck would have been caught if time had not been wasted looking for the place where Mentone had buried a big part of his loot.

Norman, his brother, and Bud Russell, after giving Limpy some advice on continuing to keep his mouth closed, sent him off toward town, then rode with the posse, but kept to themselves their reasons for believing that Buck had possibly headed for Turges Cañon.

They rode at a trot, jingling along over the bare, hot country, talking much among

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themselves of the war on nesters and the stampede, which Bob and young Russell discussed freely; and of Red Allister, whose biography was pieced together by comments from one after another.

Norman was again astonished at finding how incidents of twenty years standing were remembered with all the details of something that had happened a week before. He found that the sheriff knew all about the fight his uncle had had in the adobe house down on the Santee River, remembered something of each of the rustlers, the first name of many of them, discussed impartially the story that Allister had held back until he saw that Renalds had a show to win out, then had come to his help. He disclaimed any opinion on that beyond the statement that Renalds wasn't easily fooled.

"Now I've learned," said the sheriff putting his horse closer to Norman, whom he found a close listener, "that the badder a man is the closer you've got to watch him to see that he don't plug you when you ain't lookin'. Your real bad man is purty much of a rattlesnake without rattles. When I go after a rip-snortin' bad man I jest act much the same as if I was arrestin' a mad dog; an' if I ain't got the drop first off, why then we have it out, right there. I seen too many good men killed tryin' to bring in these bad men alive to care much about them honors for myself. An' though I am sher'ff, I want to see jestice done. But times has changed.

"There was a time when a sher'ff could stand around an' watch a hangin', but it ain't so no more. There's a pole-cat up San Carlos that runs a newspaper, the which prints things that ain't respectful to an off'cer of the law.

"A lawyer he writes things for that paper, an' I ain't got no use for them lawyers. Why, dang it, if a feller is guilty he is guilty, ain't he? Well then, what's the good in lettin' a lawyer talk a half a day tryin' to make you think he ain't? I used to discourage 'em a lot, but they're gettin' thicker than fleas on a dog's back in this country. There are *two* of 'em up to San Carlos!"

During the morning the sheriff divided his party. He sent two men off toward Frazier's to learn if Buck had passed that way—"cause a man that's ridin' hard has to change hosses frequent"—and three more rode out of their way to the northward to call on some of the small cattle outfits near and around Bald Rock.

The sheriff had had considerable experience in riding after men, and he had found, he said, that many more times than not they continued to dodge about in familiar country. They seemed to place more security in their knowledge of a locality where they had friends than in flight to strange parts. As he put it:

"Like wild hosses that used to be around here—the boys would chase 'em an' hunt 'em for weeks, and them hosses would never leave their own range. If they did, they was most sure to come back. Usual, too, hosses has more sense than men."

The party stopped on the way, and sitting on the ground, ate of the canned stuff and crackers, drank of the water, they had brought from Reddin's.

And as they rested, while the horses nibbled at dry grass, Bob suddenly threw a tin can into the air, drew and shot it before it hit the ground, shot again before it stopped rolling; and when the can lodged against a sage-brush he rapidly emptied his gun at it. Out of six shots, five had hit the can.

The railroad officers glanced at him admiringly.

"Pretty work," said Mr. James.

"Shucks," said Bud Russell. "You ought to see him when he really is shootin'!"

"What does he do then?" inquired Mr. James.

"You don't need go to no doc-feller if you've got a bad tooth. Bob here'll knock it plumb out at twenty feet. Just let him try—he won't hurt you none."

"No thanks," said Mr. James.

Bob cleaned his gun carefully, reloaded, spun it on his finger and stabbed it into the holster.

"Here you go, Bud! Show 'em what you can do!"

With that, Bob sailed his own hat into the air. Russell drew and shot rapidly, emptying his gun before the hat struck the ground.

Bob jumped forward, grabbed it up and counted the holes.

"You ol' woman! Only twict! You'd better get one of them scatter guns. I'm sure done associatin' with a fellow like you. It ain't safe. Your bullets go wild. An' now we'll trade hats!"

With that Bob jerked off Russell's hat, clapped it on his own head, and tossed his

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perforated hat into Russell's scrambling hands. They closed in, fighting good-naturedly, and both went down; they rolled over and over, kicking, pummeling, swearing, until Norman jumped up uneasily and hurried to them.

Then Bob appeared on top, sitting complacently on Russell's stomach, leaning forward, pinning Russell's arms to the ground.

"What you mean, tryin' to lick me?" demanded Bob, grinning.

"I'm just teasin' you on. Some day I'll get a bet out o' you."

Then they arose, brushed themselves with hard slaps about the clothes, affectionately denouncing each other as unfit for human companionship.

Suddenly Norman was almost convinced that Renalds was without blame, certainly to the extent that he regarded Bob as reckless and irresponsible. Bob was years older than himself, but still nothing but a rollicking boy, full of life, half-wild. Bob's fooling was just the sort of thing that a man of Renald's nature and temperament would regard with contemptuous disfavor, almost suspicion.

They rode on and reached the hay ranch a little before dark.

THE farm hands had finished supper and sat about smoking and talking. As soon as they recognized Bob Standish and Bud Russell, who had paused with clamor and haste about eight o'clock the night before, they hurried out toward the barn, wanting to know what had happened to Jeff Jones. They were bareheaded, with dried water-marks on their necks and near their ears from the supper wash-up.

Robertson, the hay ranch foreman, came too; friendly, unhurried.

"No," said Robertson to the sheriff, "we ain't seen nothin' nor heard tell of Buck. But light down, sheriff. Come on an' eat."

"We'll put up here tonight. We can sleep on our hats," said the sheriff.

After supper Bob and Russell got hold of a blanket, took a couple of pitchforks of hay, and bedded themselves down out on the open ground. They were both tired and sleepy, but long after they had turned in Norman could hear them quarreling affectionately and scuffling.

Robertson gave up his bed to Mr. James and Mr. Thompson, and went to sleep with the storekeeper; the sheriff turned into a bunk; and Norman, invited by the barn boss, went into the harness-room and found a soft bed of horse blankets. Mice rippled about him, at times over him, but he was too tired to care, and slept well.

Norman was awake before daylight, and going to the bunk-house to wash, passed Bob and Russell, sitting up, still sleepy, with hair at all angles, each complaining that the other had stolen all the soft places in the hay during the night. Norman wondered if they had slept at all.

In the bunk-house the men were being turned out by Robertson. He passed from bunk to bunk, jerking back the blankets, shaking any persistent sleeper, saying quietly—

"Roll out—roll out."

The men, one after another, sat up, staring blankly, then began awkwardly to poke themselves into overalls, to crawl upward into shirts, head first, arms waving; they stamped into heavy shoes, and those with teams to care for went stumbling toward the barn to harness up before breakfast. The men were sleepy, busy, good-natured. They sloshed about in the pans at the washbench. Two or three brushed their teeth.

All were strong fellows, good workers, but their very faces showed them as a different mould and caste from cowboys—not better, not worse, but different. These were hay hands, gathered every Spring by an employment agency of the railroad and shipped nearly a thousand miles to their work; and such few as were not needed for Winter feeding were returned, fare prepaid, in the Fall to where they had shipped from. These were the men that in a few years would fill the country. Good men, solid, strongly given to law-abiding ways, but lacking the picturesque recklessness and hardihood of the cowboys.

In that brisk morning air as he watched them through the bunk-house door at their dressing, at the pump, at their washing, Norman began more fully to understand just why cowpunchers held hay hands as a sort of inferior alien. But it was the nomads themselves who would have to go from the land, for the man who tills the ground always wins it. The earth, like a kindly mistress, yields and bears for those who caress her. Norman's sympathies suddenly went out to the men like his brother, like young

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Russell, like Slim Simmons—men who would die before taking up a pitchfork or tying themselves to a plow.

The cook appeared in the doorway of the dinning-room, shouted:

"Hey-ah! Take it away!"

And the line of men bustled aggressively into the room, crowding on the benches, reaching for dishes before they were seated.

Norman did not join them. He waited for the sheriff and his party.

"Hello, kid!" said Bob, and with that, slapped Norman powerfully on the shoulder, jerking him around, saying: "Now look here, Bud Russell, if you don't quit pickin' on me, I'll set my brother on you. Then what'll you do?"

The sheriff walked about, smoking a before-breakfast pipe, pulling at his mustache thoughtfully, wondering where to look for Buck Blevins.

Mr. James and Mr. Thompson came from the foreman's room, smiling pleasantly, saying they had slept well.

The hay hands were now stumbling from the dining-toom, full of stomach, sucking their teeth, filling pipes, taking chews of tobacco, going to their work without hesitancy and without enthusiasm. Here and there some roughly joked, pushing each other, but all moving toward the barn. They were on their way to work.

Robertson paused to wish the sheriff luck, then mounted his horse, drew rein, and watched the men and wagons and harnessed teams going afield. When he saw they were all started he rode on with them.

In an incredibly short time, the cook, with great clatter of crockery, had cleaned off the tables, and put down fresh plates, covering the boards with dishes of oatmeal, fat bacon, bread, cups, pitchers of canned milk, and crying out—

"Take it away!"

"Well I shore am ready to eat!" said Bob, falling in behind the sheriff and railroad officers.

At that moment there was a furious tattoo of hoofs as if some one rode before the devil.

"Now what's up!" cried Bob, running back, through the bunk-house and out where he could see the approach of the horsemen.

The others followed him.

A Mexican boy rode down at them on a horse that dripped sweat and lather. He reined up fiercely, crying—

"Señor Renalds he is shot—three men—All-*es*ter—last night—ride.—Red All-*es*-ter!"

Without a word Bob Standish started on a stumbling run for the barn, with Russell after him, and Norman followed.

Bob and Russell paused to snatch their ropes from the saddles, then ran on into the corral. Bob's horse warily sidled in behind the other horses, but the noosed rope slid out, across two horses' heads, another's back, and settled around Billy B's neck. Billy B dropped his head in dejection and permitted himself to be led out as if he had been a pet lamb. Russell roped Norman's horse first, then his own.

They saddled swiftly and were on their way while the sheriff was still talking to the Mexican boy. The railroad officers had gone in for a hurried breakfast.

Twenty miles lay before them and all were on horses that had been pushed exceptionally hard recently; but they rode fast, and not ten words had been spoken from the time the Mexican boy had shouted out his news. Mile after mile they rushed along. Norman was amazed at the sustained speed of the horses, but he kept up thinking every few minutes that they must pull up for a rest.

It was ten miles before Bob suddenly drew rein, shouting—"Let 'em breathe!"

He sprang down, loosened the cinches, threw off the saddle and rolled a cigaret.

"Now I guess he's found out what Allister is," said Bud Russell, shaking out his saddle blanket, refolding and throwing it again on the horse.

Neither Norman nor Bob answered.

"That's enough!" said Bob, presently, and refolding his blanket, swung up the saddle, cinched up with a flash of movement and was again in the saddle.

They had not paused five minutes, but the horses went on as if they had got new wind. They all rode Standish stock, a cross between mustang and thoroughbreds.

XXXVII

THE three men rode into the home ranch, dropped from exhausted horses, and as Matheson, the barn boss, came running, Norman shouted:

"Get in fresh horses—the best—and which way did Allister go? Where's everybody?"

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Matheson had already brought up the best horses from the pasture. He had once been injured by a bucking horse so that he could no longer ride hard or long, and so had been given work at the barn.

"There weren't nobody much but them Mexicans and me—they lit out to spread the news. Allister, him an' two fellers rode in here last night. Your uncle he hadn't been home hisself long. They dropped off an' asked me to give their horses some grain. The two men they went up to the bunk-house to rummage for a snack, an' Allister he went up to see Renalds.

"I go up to the bunk-house to see how they're gittin' on with supper. They don't talk much an' I ain't seen 'em afore. They was ridin' for the 44 they said. They came in on 44 horses. They sat around an' said nothin' for a time, but allowed they was goin' to be ridin' soon agin.

"After a while Allister he come near the house an' shouts—

" 'Let's be ridin'!'

"Then they goes out, tellin' me I needn't come—they can git their hosses all right. But I come anyhow.

"Allister he says to them—

" 'Who's with you?'

"I told him who it was.

" 'Git back an' mind your own business,' he says.

"Well, I know Allister's ace-high with the old man, so I don't go on. An' this mornin' the Mexicans up there find your uncle unconscious and Murietta dead, an' then——"

"Unconscious—isn't he dead?" cried Norman.

"He weren't," said Matheson. "I scattered ever' Mexican that could stay on a hoss to spreadin' the news ever' which way——"

Norman jumped on his exhausted horse and started for the house, calling Bob to come on.

He dismounted at the veranda and hurried into the great gloomy old house, with Bob following. A Mexican woman appeared in a far doorway.

"Where's my uncle? How is he?"

"This way, *señor*. He is asking for you many times now."

Norman followed her, rising to his toes as he walked, for the jingle of spurs and click of heel rang with clattering echo as he stepped on an uncovered space of the floor; but Bob tramped heavily, with the hurried, half-shuffling stumble of the cowboy.

Renalds had been helped into bed and undressed by the servants. He used the room that had been Colonel Standish's, and in the years that he had occupied it, hardly a thing had been changed. The big, oaken cupboard-like writing-desk, that four men could hardly lift, was against the wall; and on its shelves was a neat row of slim account-books, backed with red leather, in which Colonel Standish had kept a record of every dollar expended. Two or three Indian rugs were on the floor—blankets, used as rugs, as they were all over the house. About the walls were curious old pistols, stone-headed arrows, an Indian war-bonnet, bristling with feathers, like the tail of a turkey-gobbler. There were two or three chairs, a table, and a massive bed.

Renalds lay in the bed, flat on his back, his arms out of the covers and at the side. His forehead, about the only part of his face not covered by the black beard, was white with weakness and pain; his black eyes were sunken and full of fire.

Norman came to the side of the bed and stood silent, pausing a moment before speaking, trying to think of how to begin; but Bob came up, tramping heavily and swearing:

"By ——, Mr. Renalds, we'll get him. The blankety-blank! He's bound to head for the mountains—too many people'll know him in the open country. We just come in to tell you we're here, an' we'll be gone in two minutes. Killed Murietta, Matheson said. Matheson ought to be kicked all over the place, let them fellows get away! We stopped at the hay ranch last night—the sheriff is on the way—he waited for breakfast. We didn't. —— his soul! How'd it happen, Mr. Renalds?"

Renalds shifted his steady eyes from one face to another, and back again, fixing his gaze first on Norman, then on Bob.

"We'll get him, Mr. Renalds," said Norman. "You are badly hurt?"

"Yes," he answered quietly. "But I'll get over it"—this with low firmness as if he could overcome any injury—"I find I have been wrong about Allister. He came in here last night, said he was leaving the country, wanted me to buy the Lazy A outright. He knew I usually keep a large amount of money on hand—can make better bargains with cash. But I had no money in the house."

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Renalds paused; sweat came on his forehead, but what other expression of pain may have come to his face was concealed under the mask-like beard. His lips closed for a moment, but his eyes did not move. The spasm of pain passed, then he began speaking again.

"I told him that I was not in a position to buy the Lazy A even if I wanted to. I gave Allister and Harvey some cattle every year as a part of the wages, and I gave them ten head for every nester they made leave my range. I have known this Standish range could not be kept clean—too much artesian water, and the hay ranch to show what the land would do. I have tried to keep it clean, but I knew that it was going. But the 44 Circle range shall be cattle country as long as I live!"

His long slender hands clenched, but he did not raise them; his eyes glistened fiercely, moving from face to face. Then he relaxed slightly, the hands opened. He continued:

"Allister got angry when I asked him about Jeff Jones and Butler. He drew his gun—I was unarmed. He said he would finish the job now, as he ought to have done down on the Santee River, twenty years ago. He shot me—in the breast, and thought I was dead. Murietta must have heard the shot and come in. Allister killed him. When I came to he was opening the door of the cupboard there—under the desk, where he knew I kept money. I tried to get up. He turned and struck me over the head with the barrel of his gun. He must have thought that killed me.

"During the night I came to several times and called. It wasn't until almost morning that I made some one hear me."

"Lord, Mr. Renalds!" cried Bob, "I've cussed you up and down—you know how I've felt. We never did hide our opinions, you and me! But I'll get Allister. I'll bring him to you at the end of a rope if you want—drag him through all the cactus on the way!"

"Is there anywhere we can get a doctor?" asked Norman anxiously.

"I don't need a doctor. I've got over worse than this without a doctor," he said fiercely. Then: "Now, I want you, Norman, to look in the lower left-hand pigeon-hole of that desk. Bring the envelop here."

Norman went to the desk, drew out a large, heavy, unsealed envelop and returned to the bedside.

"Open it," said Renalds.

Norman removed a paper; it was a letter in a familiar hand.

"No. The other first," said Renalds.

Norman then took out a legal-appearing document.

"Read it," said Renalds. "Aloud."

Norman began to read slowly, then stopped. His eyes scanned the document. He dropped it to his side and stared at his uncle.

"Mr. Renalds!" he groaned with anguished apology, as he absently held out the paper toward his brother.

It was an agreement of sale, signed by Helen Standish.

"Now the other, read it!" said Renalds.

Norman read the letter, written by his mother. It said in part:

—I almost feel that I am not doing right in selling you the Star Y without the knowledge of the boys, because I know how much the home ranch means to Robert. But I must get rid of it. I know that if I do not that Norman, if he owns an interest in it, especially after my death, will go back there.

As I have written you frequently, I would gladly turn over to Robert his share now, and I would have done it long before, but you have repeatedly advised me against it, so I must follow your judgment. I had hoped that you would buy Norman's interest and let Bob retain his share, but since you say that you will not divide the management of your affairs with anybody, I can't oppose you.

My lawyer has done as you said he should, and had a valuation made; and I find as I knew I would that your offer is all that anybody could expect the ranch to sell for——

It seems that all his life I have in some way thwarted Robert, but I know you must be right in advising me not to give him any property or money until he settles down to a higher sense of responsibility. And he will, some day, I am sure. He was always a manly, straightforward boy. And I must ask you again please not to let him know that I have sold the ranch if you can help it.

I am investing the money safely, so after my death he can buy a ranch of his own if he wishes; and if he has not by that time learned responsibility he will have to take whatever lesson is in store for him. But please keep him on the ranch as long as you can.

I shall not tell even Norman that the ranch has been sold until I have to in case he ever wants to go back.

In my will I have divided everything equally between the two boys, even my property. Then when I am dead perhaps Robert will understand that I have always liked him, and never meant to mistreat him——

The two boys looked weakly at each

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other, their faces almost bloodless with shame and humiliation.

Then Bob pushed closer to the bed and cried:

"Great ——, Mr. Renalds! I'll have to dig a hole in the ground to get low enough to apologize to you! You ought to chased me off the range long ago! But I'll say this: If you let me stay, I'll show you what I can do when I know I've been a ——ed fool!"

Renalds barely shook his head.

"You are a richer man than I am, Robert. I am heavily involved. I bought the Star Y only because I didn't want any one else to get hold of it. The nesters have ruined its range. Only the farmers are going to make money up in this country now —but even the hay ranch won't pay, for the farmers will raise their own feed, and the hay ranch is too far off to be of much good for the Santee cattle and——"

"By ——!" Bob shouted, "as long as I've got a dollar it's yourn, Mr. Renalds. I'm never goin' have no self-respect till I do something for you."

"Kill Allister!" said Renalds, eyes blazing.

"I'll do it, sir!"

"And you, Norman——"

"If I could, sir, I would apologize, but I can think of nothing humble enough to do justice to the wrong I have done you!"

"I went on to New York to see you, Norman. I learned then that you had left without seeing your mother's lawyer, so of course you didn't know. And now you understand why I preferred to wait until we were here at the ranch house before I explained. Those papers were here."

"Mr. Renalds," Norman asked pleadingly, "is there anything I can say or can do that will——"

"Yes. Kill Allister!" he said evenly, eyes glistening.

"Allister's a dead man!" Bob almost shouted, as he turned and stamped for the door, not pausing as he called: "Come on, kid. Let's be ridin'!"

Norman started for the door, looked back, turned and came to the bed:

"Uncle, I was a fool, I was a blind fool to think——"

"Yes," said Renalds quietly. "But you were no coward, and it is the coward I never forgive. Allister is one, but for twenty years I thought he had done a recklessly brave thing, and I would not listen to any word against him. Now go, *and kill Allister!*"

The quiet intensity of his voice was like the rasp of steel, and the dark eyes burned with a fire hotter than any fever.

XXXVIII

ABOUT eleven o'clock they headed for Turges Cañon.

Norman carried field-glasses, and a rifle under his leg. Both Bob and Russell, with cowboy confidence in a .45, refused to be burdened with "one of them long guns." They had raided the store-room and filled their pockets with cartridges.

"So," Bob said, "if them fellows take to cover we can entertain 'em with a little music."

They headed for the cañon because Bob had explained:

"In this country when a man knows you are hot on his trail he lights out for the mountains, first thing. Allister'll go into the cañon, figurin' it's near at hand and leads to good hidin'-ground; and it sure does. He'll figure that he can work across the mountains and maybe drift down toward the border. It's a long jump, but he's on the hop.

"He may still think rustlers are in up there, and figure to join 'em. A couple of armies couldn't get 'em out in a month. Or he may have heard about me, an' in that case, thinking he and his men will have the cañon all to themselves, he'll sure figure it's a good place for him to hit for. Twenty to one, he's made for the cañon—and won't he get a jolt!"

"Jolt, why? How'll we ever be able to get him out?" Norman asked.

"Why? Why! Old Sawyer pulled back up there. And old Sawyer sleeps with one eye open and the other only about half-shut. He went back up there to cache some stuff we had at the camp. He'll sure make it hot for 'em with that long horn rifle of his!"

They had left word with Matheson that as men came in, if the trail had not been picked up elsewhere, everybody was to ride for the cañon.

Not until the last mile did they pick up a trail. Then Bud reined up and pointed to the ground. He and Bob rode back and forth for some distance over the hoof-marks of this solitary horse, and gathered

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information that was tormentingly imperceptible to Norman, who leaned on his horn and stared from the ground to the faces of the two men.

"He rode this way yesterday," said Russell.

"Afternoon," declared Bob, placing the time more definitely.

"In no great shucks of a hurry 'pears like."

"His horse was tired."

"Shore was," Russell agreed. "But comin' from the wrong direction to be Allister. This feller's comin' in from the north more."

"He pulled up frequent to take a look all around."

"Can't imagine who——"

"I'll bet it's Buck!" said Bob. "He would be coming in just about this direction if he rode down from Reddin's. But it's not Buck we want."

When they came nearer to the mouth of the cañon the ground was badly cut up by old hoof-marks, and they had to scrutinize it closely for fresh signs; and they changed course and rode diagonally, climbing up and down the steep arroyos gashed into the earth by the cañon's flood waters. They knew that this way they must sooner or later cut the trail of Allister and his party if they had come into the cañon, though it would be almost impossible to detect the tracks after they got on the rocky floor of the cañon itself.

They found the fresh trail of three men who had ridden in from the south, having made a détour in the dark to escape the deeply cut and broken ground.

"What shall we do now?" asked Norman at the mouth of the cañon.

"We're goin' in, of course," said Bob, looking after young Russell, who with his eyes on the ground, examining tracks, was riding slowly ahead.

"Won't they be behind rocks?"

"Won't there be just as many rocks for us to get behind?"

"But we are running the chance of getting into an ambush," Norman protested, sanely.

"Think we're goin' set down here and wait for Allister to get hungry enough to come out? By this time tomorrow there'll be fifty men, each rarin' to get a shot at Allister—and it's for you and me to get him. We don't want to have to explain to Renalds how somebody else killed Allister—do we? What'd you say?"

"Let's go in."

"Now you're talkin'. We'll not go rampin' in there, askin' to be shot—we'll use some sense, and——"

Russell, from fifty yards ahead of them, raised a cry:

"Come here you fellers! Look here—they camped here—look at these tracks!"

They rode up. Russell pointed to the ground. Norman at first could see nothing but confused marks about the dead ashes of a small fire.

"Barefoot—a kid's—a girl's—Jess Frazier's in here!" said Russell.

"The —— dogs!" cried Bob.

"We'll shore fix 'em for that!" said Russell.

"In we go!" cried Bob, and spurred ahead.

Though he had said that he wasn't going "ramping" in, "asking to be shot," Bob rode at a gallop, gun out, peering ahead. Norman tried to crowd into place behind him, but Russell recklessly surged ahead of Norman. The clatter of their hoofs rattled like musketry against the walls of the cañon.

Norman had always thought of himself as a good rider, but in recent weeks he had learned that there were many far better than himself; and his brother and Russell were among the best. Before, with Simmons and Harvey, he had come into this cañon with men that rode as furiously as horses could go, but they had come five to one, hot in pursuit. Now they were riding three against five, for the tracks of the man and horse that had brought in Jess Frazier had been found; and they were riding into a stronghold where a single rifle had on another occasion been able to repel Harvey's party.

But there was a surge of wild youth in Bob. He had never grown up; and Russell, much the younger, was hardly more of a boy. They had absolutely no sense of fear, and, supremely confident in their marksmanship, took odds as a matter of course.

Now they paused for nothing, peering keenly ahead, with guns drawn and half-raised. The wind beat up the stiff brims of their hats. Their handkerchiefs fluttered about their necks. They sat easily, well forward, leaning ahead, riding with flexible sway of muscular bodies, helping their horses with balanced rise and push. The

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cañon was familiar ground to them; and on they went, hardly slacking rein when they had to scramble over boulders. They went on, farther than Harvey had gone. There was no chance for secrecy; and, after all, stealth would not have been much better; for a guard could have seen them almost as far off as he could have heard them.

Then a bullet spat through Bob's hat. He shot so quickly in reply that the reports of the two guns rebounded at the same echo; and, so swiftly that Norman thought he had been killed, Bob fell along the side of his horse, pulled the horse around, and dropped into the shelter of a rock with the yell:

"*Ee-i-oh.* We've got 'em!"

Russell, too, tumbled off as if falling, and, seemingly, was shooting as he fell.

Norman, with less quickness, scrambled down. The horses, loosened, plunged wildly, with reins falling about their forefeet.

"*Yi*, Allister! We've got you now!" Bob yelled.

Then he laughed, really mirthful. Bud Russell grinned.

Then Norman rather shame-facedly remembered his rifle. It was still in the scabboard. He had forgotten it, though of course he still had a .45.

Bob put his back up against the rock and rolled a cigaret. Norman glanced warily up along the overhanging rocks.

"Come on Allister! Come on, shoot it out!" Russell called, peering around the rock.

But he held his hat in his hand some three feet above his head as he took his look.

"See anything?" asked Bob, almost as if they were lying in wait for antelope. Then: "Say—I just remembered! We didn't have no breakfast and no dinner! I sure forgot to eat. Hey, Allister—we want to get back for supper. Come on out, skunk!"

An echoing voice, half-doubtfully called—

"Allister ain't here!"

"Well, write him a letter. Tell him we want to see him!" Bob shouted.

"Who are you?" Russell called.

"You blankety-blanks are not goin' to git me—alive!"

"That you, Buck?"

"Yes, but I'm not goin' to be took alive!"

"Who in —— wants you!" Bob answered. "Where's Allister?"

"Gone! Left the cañon at daybreak."

"You're a liar!" Bob answered cheerfully.

"I'm not. Ever'body left but me."

"Why didn't you go, Buck?"

"Haven't got any hoss. Somebody killed it yesterday, up the cañon here a piece. I tried to talk to the feller, but he nearly shot me. You're Bob Standish, ain't you?"

"I sure am. And I want Allister."

"He's gone, I tell you. I heard it was you, Bob, that was playin' rustler—but there's somebody up there now."

"You bet there is. Better come out, Buck."

"Not alive!"

"It's not you we want. It's Allister."

"I know. He killed Renalds. But he's gone, I tell you."

"You're a liar," Bob shouted, with less good nature.

"I can prove it!" answered Buck.

"I can read trails too."

"Bob? O Bob?"

"What is it?"

"Jess Frazier is up here a piece. She'll tell you—you believe her?"

"What's she doing with you? Was that *you* that stole her?"

"No, —— you! I wouldn't do a thing like that!"

"How'd she come to be with you?"

Instead of answering, Buck shouted:

"O Jess! Jessie! Come on down. Bob Standish is here. I want you to tell him something!"

There was no answer, and for a time all was silent in the cañon. Far above in the crack that exposed the sky, a broad winged bird wheeled. Norman watched it, scarcely aware of it. He was thinking confusedly.

"Comin' Jess?" Buck shouted again.

A thin girlish voice faintly reached them.

"I'm comin' Buck!"

Then again silence, gloomy, intense, oppressive between the dark walls of the cañon.

Then from Buck:

"I ain't got nothin' ag'in you, Bob, but that dude tenderfoot—I'll kill him, the blankety-blank!"

"You're loco, Buck. It was that kid that sent you word to light out from Reddin's."

"You're a liar!" Buck answered at the top of his voice.

Then no one spoke. Bob rolled another cigaret. Bud Russell stood up, at first cautiously, and, reassured by not being instantly shot, climbed to the top of the rock, and presently said:

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"Hello there, sis!"

Bob, who had also stood up, called cheerfully to the slight girlish figure coming slowly over the rocks beyond where Buck still lay, distrustful and out of sight.

Bob started forward, but was ordered to stop:

"Git back there, Bob. No man's goin' to take me alive!"

"Oh shut up," said Bob, not pausing. "Nobody wants to take you. At least nobody here does. But the sheriff and some railroad officers'll be along pretty soon."

"Go back Bob!"

"Go to ——"

"I'll——"

A gun was leveled over the rock.

"Buck! Buck Blevins—don't!" Jess cried.

"I won't be took!" said Buck, sullenly.

"Nobody's going to take you. Where's Allister, Jess?"

She was still too far away to speak without shouting, and answered—

"He's gone—Buck bought me from him!"

"Bought you? How's that Buck?"

"I told him where I planted the railroad's money," said Buck, still distrustful. "Don't come a step closer!"

"Shut up," said Bob, and he went on, followed by Russell.

Norman, too, was now in plain sight, and Buck glared at him from across the top of his rock; then shouted:

"Don't *you* come closer—you—I'll kill *you*, —— you!"

"No you won't Buck," said Bob, without anger. "He oughtn't have made you take in that cow—but you ought to see them Welch babies—fat as Winter-feed yearlings. He'll apologize for that. Norman come up and apologize."

"This is a trick—you'll not get me!"

Buck raised his gun menacingly.

"Buck!" called the girl, pleading.

"I'll not be took!"

"Come on up here, Norman," said his brother.

Norman did not answer, but came slowly, really uneasy. He could see Buck's drawn, haggard face, full of anger.

Bob leaned against the rock beside Buck and said soberly:

"Put that thing away. We're Star Y men—an' you're a —— fool."

"Nobody'll take me alive," said Buck, stubbornly, but lowering his gun.

"So Sawyer shot your horse, eh?"

"Was that Sawyer? I didn't know. I was ridin' slow. I jest heard a voice say, 'Stop,' but I yelled back, 'I got a-talk to you' and went on. Then he dropped my hoss. Square through the head. He shore can shoot. That was quite a ways up the cañon yit."

"Yes, I know where," said Bob. "When we were expecting trouble, Sawyer used to lay on a ledge back this way. He's up to where we had a camp now."

Jess had approached. She was shy and tired, looked thin and smiled wearily. She still wore the soiled, loose, and now torn gown that Norman remembered at McCullough's. Her hair was down and loose. Her feet bare.

Bob asked her what she was trying to do, elope? She smiled shyly, and drew back, very tired, but teased.

"Buck," said Bob, "who shot that expressman? You or Mentone?"

"Mentone. It don't make no difference—it's hangin' anyhow. But Mentone done it. I was drinkin' around town there, sayin' I wished I had money enough to pay off Renalds so I could tell the Star Y to go to ——, because I wasn't ever goin' to work for it again. I said I'd do anything to git some money. Mentone he got to tellin' me how easy it was to hold up a train—him bein' a railroad man—an' git enough to make us both rich, without nobody ever knowin'.

"Well, we flagged her down one night. Then he cut the express car loose and hauled it about a mile down the track to where we had our hosses. Then he made 'em cut the engine loose and go on.

"They wasn't goin' let us in the express car till Mentone told 'em we had dynamite and blow up the whole caboodle. Well, we got in, then both fellers said they couldn't open the safe. I was almost glad. I was gettin' sober enough not to want to be a train robber. But Mentone shot one of the fellers and said to the other, 'You're next if you don't open her up,' and the feller he opened her.

"We took all the money an' gold dust an' lit out. The next mornin' we whacked up. Mentone said we'd got between ten and twelve thousand in coin and dust. I don't know. I took the dust and some of the money. He said I could go off somewhere an' pertend to have been runnin' a placer. He said there wasn't a chanct of anybody knowin' who done it.

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"Well, I dug a hole an' hid mine an' rode off. Then I went back an' got it. I tried to hide it two or three times, but I just couldn't turn loose of the stuff. I was packin' about twenty pounds or more, I guess, in my saddle bags. I thought I'd leave the country, but where the —— could I go? An' I figured nobody would know it was me. I drifted down Santee way, huggin' the mountains pretty clost, but when I met fellers they didn't show no sign of thinking I was a train robber, so I went to work for Allister, an' figurin' that I was safe.

"Ever' where I went I said how I had it in for this feller here and—" defiantly—"I shore ain't got no use for you now, either!"

From level eyes Norman returned the hard look and did not answer.

"Red Allister, he heard what I'd been sayin', an' the night afore the stampede he come to me to take a letter into town. I didn't wanta go, not to town I didn't. But he said his letter would shore put this Standish feller to the bad, an' besides I could tell Renalds first off my troubles, so o' course I started.

At Reddin's I knowed I better git rid of that gold afore I went on into town, so I hid it out back of the corral. Then I got drunk, an' this feller stole my letter. I was goin' to lay for him, but that nigger o' Welch's come ridin' fast an' said ever'body knowed it was me an' Mentone that robbed the train. He said Welch sent him an' told me to hit for the cañon, so I lit out.

"Last night after my hoss was killed I started down out of cañon. I was goin' to try to sneak over to the Star Y pasture an' git a hoss. It was hard goin' over these rocks on foot. Come dark, I got some driftwood an' made me a fire. It's cold in here at night. I was woke up by hearin' hosses comin,' an' I shore thought I was gone.

"But it was Red Allister an' his men. Red he told me he had killed Renalds an' had Jess Frazier with him. He said he took her to even up on that Standish dude.

"Red he was glad to see me. He said we'd all push back into the mountains and lay low a time. I tells him he can't make it, and how my hoss was killed. I tells him too he's got to turn Jess loose. He says like —— he will. Then I tells him it was me an' Mentone that held up the train, an' I got $10,000 planted at Reddin's. There ain't that much, but I tells him $10,000 anyhow. He wants to know where. I says—

" 'You give me a hoss and let Jess loose, an' I'll tell you.'

"He says I can have Jess, but they ain't got no hosses to spare.

"I said then—

" 'You let Jess get over behind me here in the rocks, so I'll know you won't change your mind, an' I'll tell you, fair and square.'

"Then when Jess is safe, I pulls a gun an' gits behind a rock an' tells him.

"He says—

" 'How do I know you're tellin' the truth?'

" 'You don't,' I says, 'but you can go see, or go to ——. I don't care which.'

"They wait till jest about sun-up, then light out. Jess and me was goin' on up the cañon. I was goin' to have a talk with that feller—I didn't know it was Sawyer—an' tell him I was on the run, too, and would throw in with him. I didn't know how Jess was ever to git home, but I was shore goin' to take care of her."

Jess pressed closer to Buck, unconsciously taking his arm, holding to it, like a child. Her dark eyes glanced at him admiringly.

"Buck," said Norman, "an apology isn't much good. I only meant that cow to sort of pay you back for calling me a Gallisomething or other that night in town. But I did want her taken in by a man I could trust not to run her dry, and you did it like a man."

He put out his hand.

Buck shook his head.

"Nope. I don't like you. You can go to —— for all of me. I like Bob here, an' Bud Russell, but I ain't got no use for you!"

"Oh shut up," said Bob impatiently. "We're after Allister. How'd he leave the cañon?"

"Rode along the north side."

"Sure he did! Going to Reddin's. But we saw the trail on the south side coming in an' never looked on the other side.

"Now listen, Buck, we've got to be ridin.' You and Jess go on back up the cañon. Sawyer won't shoot—not when he sees a girl anyhow. You call him by name, say I sent you. There 're horses up there—good ones. Sawyer'll tell you how to get over the mountains. Leave Jess with him—he'll bring her down. Nobody'll ever know you were up here an'——"

"Them Allister fellers'll tell."

"They're not goin' to be able to do any

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talking by the time anybody gets close enough to listen. We've got to be ridin'. Put her here, Buck—" he held out his hand—"you are all right, but the same as me, an awful fool. We'll look after Jess and the Fraziers."

Buck shook hands with Bob and Russell, hesitated a moment, then avoided Norman's gaze.

"Old Sawyer'll bring you down," said Bob cheerfully to Jess, "an' Kate will look after you till Buck here makes a fortune an' sends for you."

She looked away, blushing shyly.

"Good-by," she said. Then, "Good-by, Mr. Standish."

"Good-by," said Norman.

Then the three of them went with hurrying stumbling steps down the cañon after their horses; these had not gone far, for their reins were trailing and they had been taught to stand—as cowboys called it—"hitched to the ground."

XXXIX

THEY rode out of the cañon, turning sharply to the north wall, and saw the fresh tracks of four horses.

"Well, in a way, I'm glad we didn't see them," said Bob. "Otherwise old Buck would sure have been caught. He's a good fellow, Buck is—but a fool. His two hundred dollar saddle is up there now on a dead horse!"

"Think Allister will make for Reddin's?" asked Norman.

"Sure he will. He'll figure that he'll be ridin' ahead of the news, and that goin' cross-country nobody'll see him, an' that everybody will be lookin' for him down this way. And they won't scatter. Those fellows will stick to Allister like hair to a horse till the money's whacked."

They decided to ride back to the ranch, change horses, head off people from gathering at the cañon, then try to make Reddin's some time during the night.

Bob and Russell both reasoned that Allister's party would not push their horses much, but save their wind in case they had to make a dash for the mountains during the day, and that they wouldn't try to make Reddin's before dark. Then the chances were that they would put in the night there.

"Figurin,'" Bob said, "to rest their horses, get some rest theirselves, and that nobody would be lookin' for them that far north. Then in the morning they will light out for the mountains again, cutting in this side of Bald Rock. But they're sure going to have their sleep all busted to ——!"

On the way to the ranch they turned back the sheriff and three or four other men, together with Robertson of the hay ranch, who had ridden in with them.

"Sheriff," said Bob, taking him to one side, "I think I know where Allister'll be layin' up tonight. An' I have a right smart idea that he's not goin' to be took alive—not if I can help it, he ain't. So if your official conscience is likely to overpower you, I suggest you keep right on lookin' for Buck Blevins, who's likely gone down in the Santee country by now."

"Bob," said the sheriff, "I allow as my conscience ain't none too much dazzled by the star on my vest. An' even if I am sheriff, I wanta see jestice done. An' if you promise not to hang 'im right under my nose so that skunk up in San Carlos can't write no stories about me in his paper, I'll do my duty as an honest man an' not as an off'cer of the law."

"Sheriff, if Allister is hung, it'll be after he is as dead as lead can make him!"

At the ranch they changed horses, taking animals left in the pasture because they were considered too good for round-up work. Bob and Norman again visited Renalds's bedside for a minute and told him what they had found out. Then, leaving word with Matheson that all who came were to push on toward Reddin's, they set out. It was nearly three o'clock. Some seventy miles lay before them.

All afternoon they pushed on. It was jog, jog, jog, steadily, except when they broke into a lope, and most of the way, silently. They pushed on, cross-country, over mesas, up the slow curve of hills, cutting across the bare land with the sure instinct of homing-pigeons. There were eight in the party, but Bob, Norman and Russell had the best horses. Now and then they dipped into saddle-bags and brought out a cold biscuit and a piece of cheese, eating as they rode.

The sun came down to the edge of the world, glaring red-eyed across the plains, throwing masses of color into the sky, touching the mountains with a purplish glow; then, rapidly, it became dark.

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Still there was no pause, no hesitancy. Bob Standish was riding over country he had been born on, raised on. The stars danced with flickering brilliance, as if jumping up and down. All the world was shadowed as if with dark but transparent veils. Behind them the mountains seemed slumbering like a herd of enormous brutes, crouching down on folded legs.

Hour after hour in the dark they rode on—now galloping, now trotting, now walking; then into the gallop again. They were on horses that were better than thoroughbreds, the best of a cross between thoroughbreds and range horses, swift and tireless, that seemed vibrantly to sense the impatience of their riders, and push on with alert eagerness.

It seemed to Norman that they would never stop, that they were doomed men, pushing forward over a dark waste. The ceaseless soft clatter of hoofs grew monotonous. He got a pain in his side that persisted, however he changed his weight. Already men had slowed down to save their horses, and when they pulled down to rest they did not catch up. But Norman kept beside the sheriff at the tail of Bob's horse.

"How much further, Bob?" asked the sheriff.

"Fifteen or twenty mile."

Just like that; a matter of five miles was nothing. Norman thought every few minutes that he must surely pull down and rest after the next mile; but he pressed his lips and rode forward.

It was on, on, on. Norman had ridden it but a few nights before, and it had not seemed so long. Then he had dozed in the saddle, stopped every few miles to dismount and stretch his legs. Now there was no rest, the pace was faster, and the riding with silent men was more lonely than riding alone. Hours seemed to go by.

"Now we'll ride for it!" said Bob, and went into a gallop. "Ten or twelve mile," he shouted.

It was like a race.

"No hoss can stand this!" cried the sheriff.

"Then we'll walk, when they drop," answered Norman.

Robertson dropped back. Only the sheriff remained with them now; then two miles more and the sheriff slid behind.

Norman held his eyes on the dim form that he knew was Bob's back and sank in the spurs when his horse slackened. He knew it was madness, the way they were riding; but it was a madness that had touched him too. He sank into an almost trance-like intensity, and rode on, desperately. He felt that if he ever got his feet to earth again that nothing could induce him to climb into another saddle.

Then came relief.

"Whoa!" said Bob, pulling down. "We are near the edge of the basin."

"What'd you say, Bob, shall we wait for 'em to catch up?" asked Bud Russell, grinning in the starlight.

"Wait ——!" said Bob. "Why do you suppose we ran away from 'em? But we go sort of slow from here. They may be on the lookout down there."

Norman took out his watch, but before he could strike a match, Bob, with an upward glance at the stars said:

"Good ridin' we've done. Kid, you *are* a wonder. Do you know you've been near twenty hours in the saddle this day?"

"Yes," said Norman wearily, "I know it."

"Bet you can't walk without staggerin' like a drunk," said Russell.

"I don't feel as though I can walk at all."

"You can't, I bet. For a while," said Russell.

"There's no light down there," Bob reported, after having ridden forward to the edge of the basin.

"How are we going to find out if Allister is there?"

"We'll find out plenty quick. Pile off an' out with the hobbles," said Bob. "We walk from here."

Norman dismounted with effort. His body seemed cramped rigidly to fit the form of a saddle. He clutched at a stirrup for support, but his legs simply gave way and he sank to the ground. His legs seemed at once numb and cramped.

"What's the matter?" asked Bob good-naturedly, stumbling up to him. "You'll get your legs in a minute. Rub' em. Here, I'll rub 'em for you. Feel like the saddle had split you half-way up the back? But let me tell you, they don't make 'em any better horsemen than you. Do they, Bud?"

"Sure don't."

"Now," said Bob, "we'll slip down an' take a look at the horses in the corral. That'll tell us something. If no horses are there we'll know we've had our ride for nothing."

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"Lord," said Russell, "if I ever get a chanct to sleep again—won't I use it!"

Norman found that gradually his stiff legs were becoming useful, but it was difficult to walk until, again, excitement came to his aid; then he forgot his legs.

They had gone about a hundred yards when Bob said:

"No talkin' an' no noise. Somebody may be on guard."

Then with the stealth of Indians they moved forward, using the shade of mesquite and sage to huddle together for a moment, listening watchfully, before advancing another few yards.

They had come around to the back of Reddin's, and getting into the shadow of the corral, peered through.

Bob gripped Norman's arm:

"They're here! That piebald is Allister's!"

Norman stared hard. He could not see a piebald. He saw only the confused grouping of many horses, some five or six.

"Oughtn't we to wait? We can't surround the place—just us three?"

"Listen, Norman. We're doin' this for Renalds—to show him. It's not showing him anything if we ride in on Allister twenty strong. The sheriff'll wait for Robertson—both of them will wait for morning. Let's go in an' get him—what'd you say?"

"I'll go."

"Come on."

They moved forward cautiously. Bob seemed to have the eyes of a cat. He knew every foot of Reddin's better than he knew the lines of his hand, and even in the shadow of buildings and cottonwood could see objects and identify them where Norman could see nothing. And he realized why people spoke of his brother as they did, half-admiringly condemning his wildness, his headlong intensity, his rash fearlessness.

"I know there's a guard someplace," Bob whispered. "Wonder what they've done with the Mexicans—they wouldn't have left the place just because Reddin was dead. We'll look around a bit, but keep between the house and the corrals, pretty well. If they make a break it will be for their horses. Take off your spurs!"

Norman bent and fumblingly removed his spurs, laying them to one side.

As they moved toward one of the adobe sheds Norman's foot struck something. He stooped. It was a whisky bottle. In a moment he saw another. Then many. The ground seemed covered with them.

"Everybody musta been on a drunk here yesterday," said Russell whispering and Norman knew, too, that he was grinning.

They came to the open door of a house used by the Mexicans, and peered into the darkness. Bob stepped inside and struck a match, shading the glow in cupped hands.

"Oh!" he said, and dashed out the match.

"What was it, Bob."

"Men tied up—looked dead. I guess they were just drunk. Allister's tied 'em up so if they sobered they couldn't get away an' tell he was here. Come on."

They went toward the kitchen, moving on tiptoes. Norman noticed that both Bob and Russell had drawn their guns. He drew his.

Norman felt that he saw a vanishing flicker of light; and instantly Bob pulled him back and down, whispering—

"I saw a light!"

"I too."

"Yes," said Russell.

They waited. There was no sound, and no further sign of the light. Norman would have thought it fancy, but all of them had seen a faint glow momentarily reflected at a window in the barroom, as if somebody had walked past it with a cigaret aglow.

Bob edged forward. They followed on their toes.

Then they heard steps—the slow crunch of a man walking about, and the scrape of spurs.

Instinctively the three of them made a light-footed run for the shadow of the kitchen wall, and moved quickly toward the kitchen door. It was unlocked, but squeaked as Bob pushed at it. He left off pushing, waiting, listening. The steps too had stopped, as if the man on watch was also listening suspiciously.

Then they could hear the man's steps again, moving more quickly, coming as if to investigate.

"In with you!" Bob whispered noiselessly at Norman's ear, and he and Russell sidled through the door less than half-open.

Bob followed, gently pushing Norman to one side, farther into the kitchen.

The man on watch had heard something. He paused again, listening; then came on, slowly, as if a little puzzled.

Right at the kitchen door he stopped:

"Oh Red? That you, Red?"

No answer.

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He waited a moment, his hand against the door, pushing a little. It creaked. Then, raising his voice—

"Allister!"

They heard an impatient, low, sullen answer that seemed to come from far away, and did come from the other side of the house—

"What is it?"

Allister had answered from the door that opened from the barroom toward the corrals. The man turned, his steps going toward the voice.

"I thought I heard something."

"Come here," said Allister. "Can't a feller sleep without you shoutin' like this? Come here a minute."

Then from the passageway that passed the dining-room and came to the kitchen, a door opened and light streamed through it. The three men had been straining at the outside door and kitchen window to listen to Allister's voice. Bob and Russell wheeled with guns leveled: It was Toina, carrying a lamp. She was dressed, even to a hat.

She saw them and stood motionless with fright; she seemed trying to scream, but was silent though her mouth opened; then she staggered back weakly, the lamp wobbling in her hands.

Norman jumped forward on his toes, caught the lamp and whispered fiercely—

"Quiet!"

"Oh," she said, and slumped against the wall, her eyes staring in doubt and fear.

"What you after? Speak low!"

Toina gasped, then whispered, not as if trying to lower her voice but as if she could not raise it.

"I was going with Red—came to get food. He's—he's leaving 'em—listen!"

They listened tensely, but as they listened, Norman blew out the light, took a firm hold on Toina and set down the lamp.

Through the kitchen window they heard Allister saying:

"Thought you heard somebody moving about, huh? Well, you did. I was just makin' sure that you was awake. What's that there on the ground—right at your feet—see?"

The next instant there was a thud, a groan, and the scraping of unsteady feet; rapid thuds as Allister clubbed the man who had been keeping good watch—perhaps as much as anything to see that Red Allister did not slip away with the gold they had found where they had been told they would find it.

Then softly, triumphantly, they heard Allister call as he stepped back into the barroom:

"Toina? Toina, I've fixed him!"

She shrieked, and shrieked again, in spite of the gripping fingers with which Norman reached for her throat.

"They're here — Run Red — Red — Re——!"

The word died away under the fierce strangling.

"Toina!" he yelled. "What's the matter! Toina!"

Then he listened a moment, alarmed, terrified, wondering if she had gone mad.

Bud Russell slipped rapidly out of the kitchen door to stand guard between the house and the corral. A deep sleepy voice, from some one struggling to awake, growled, "What's up?" in the dining-room, and Bob, who had started to pass Toina turned back toward the dining-room door. Norman was holding her firmly, bending her back across his knee. She pulled at his hands, then convulsively began to kick.

Instantly Allister yelled:

"Bill! Pete! *He-yi*—we're cornered!"

He shot blindly into the floor, awakening his men. At the same moment there was another shot from the outside: Bud Russell had fired into the barroom door at little more than the shadow of a shadow as Allister leaped across it.

Norman flung the woman from him and felt the rush of his brother's body as Bob leaped forward, into the dining-room; and instantly there was a roar of guns. Norman sprang after him.

The tired men with Allister had made their beds on the dining-room table. In a way, they had felt fairly secure for the night at Reddin's, but they slept in the dining-room, thinking to be more ready for fight than if caught in the rooms upstairs. And they were.

They all shot in the dark, fighting by the light of their own guns. Norman blazed away. He seemed strangely alone, miles from anybody. He thought the shooting would never end. The roar was deafening and continuous, like thunder, and a night filled with lightning.

Then he went down, feeling a warm numbing thrust somewhere near his stomach. There was no pain. He simply crumpled,

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and pulled desperately with his trigger finger—but the gun had fallen from his hand.

It seemed that the storm had passed, except for echoes, far away. There was no more shooting in the dining-room, but outside of the house some one was shooting. It sounded miles away.

Norman felt weak, sickened, but his head seemed clear and as if detached from his body. He tried to get up, wondering what was the matter. His legs would not move. He groped about for the gun, but his hand was heavy. He tried to call, "Bob!" His lips moved but he could not hear the sound. He thought, "This is death!" and was surprized that he did not care.

The shooting had stopped. The woman in the kitchen was still screaming. Then he heard voices, loud, indistinct, confused and the clattering stumble of feet as a shape came through the barroom door.

A voice called:

"Norman? Kid! God, if they——"

Norman tried to answer, and groaned.

Bob swore anxiously, stumbling toward him, calling to him. Then there was the flare of a match against Bob's peering face, and he threw his gun into his holster, kneeling down.

"Kid—my God, Norman!"

Norman tried to say, "I am all right!" but his lips asked whisperingly—

"Allister?"

"The skunk quit cold!" Bob answered in furious disgust. "Raised his hands an' came right out of the door, begging, 'Don't shoot, boys!' And Bud simply couldn't pull down on him!"

Then again Bob swore anxiously, lighting another match, kneeling, bending over him, feeling of him, begging to know where he was hit.

"Where's that —— lamp?" Bob asked of nobody, raising up, a third match flaring in his hand.

A far door opened. The match went out, a gun flashed into his hand as Bob crouched.

"It's me," said a low, slow voice—Clara's.

"Get a lamp!" shouted Bob. "They've killed my brother!"

XL

TWO lamps were burning in the dining-room, one at each end of the long table.

To Norman these lights seemed swinging in a haze, and his own head seemed detached from his body and swimming about instead of being on Clara's arm as she knelt and supported him.

He could see, confusedly, that there were three men in the room; two near one end of the table, and one at the other end. The men stood near the lamps. In the kitchen a woman was screaming, sobbingly. In the dining-room it was quiet.

Norman heard a voice that he vaguely recognized as his brother's. It was changed, quiet, low, strong.

"— you start to draw when Bud Russell shoots into the floor, but if you start one second before that, he'll put the bullet into you! He'll shoot an' throw away his gun. If you can kill me, Allister, you can kill Bud too, before he picks up his gun. It's not fair play we're giving you—it's just that we can't kill even a snake that won't fight!"

Norman's eyes cleared. He could see Allister's face, but he wouldn't have known it was Allister's. It looked like a grotesque mask.

He could not see Bob's face. He could see only Bob's hand, hanging loose at his side, full-length.

Allister's arms were half-crooked, his fingers were claw-like, set to snatch, his body leaned forward tensely, his face was distorted with savage fear.

"All fixed, skunk?" asked Bud Russell, from beside Bob, his gun leveled at Allister.

Allister made a muffled sound.

"Ready, Bob?"

"Ready, Bud!"

Flame darted toward the floor from Russell's gun, and it dropped from an open hand.

Allister bent and jerked, plunging trickily toward the floor, dodging as he drew.

But near Bob's side there was a glint of motion, two shots that mingled echoes, and Allister lurched sprawlingly forward and lay face down on the floor, with a hole in his face and the top blown off of his head.

When Norman came to he was on a bed, with Bob and Bud on one side and Clara, the emotionless, holding a pan of water and sopping his face with her soft, fat hand.

It was dawn.

IN THE next few months there were many changes in the country.

The Fraziers, Jess, Paw and Maw, loaded their meager household goods into

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the covered wagon and pulled out, heading West. They could not be induced to stay, for everything about their place now continually reminded them of Wally.

The Welches sold out to the Davises, and took up a homestead in Reddin's basin; but Mrs. Welch would not have her house used as a tavern, so Welch laid aside the bar towel and put his hand to the plow, and began to get plenty of sleep, night-time.

Renalds felt himself fortunate in being able to sell out the entire hay ranch to an English Land Company that planned to raise cattle under fences, and was glad to get a big ranch already under cultivation. Renalds then withdrew all his Star Y cattle to the Santee country, fenced in his range and kept men in the saddle to hold it against wire-cutters. He knew that it was a losing fight, but loosing fights did not deter him any.

Norman, as a result of the fight at Reddin's, remained in a dangerous condition for a long time; and it was not until a famous surgeon from a far-off city had come to the ranch house and taken out a bullet from near his spine that Norman began to recover. The surgeon had not at all wanted to come; but Bob, who had a way of getting what he really went after, went for the surgeon, chartered a special car and brought him. After that, Norman grew well rapidly; and, he insisted, reluctantly, for he was being very well taken care of by Kate McCullough, who had come into the house and taken charge of him.

Then amid great festivity, to which cowboys came for more than a hundred miles around, Kate and Bob were married by the preacher from San Carlos; who, Kate admitted, did not after all look nearly so much the parson as the old fellow who had married them the first time.

One evening by the glow in the big fireplace, Norman and Bob talked over their future.

"Cattle is all I know," said Bob.

"It's all I care for," said Norman.

"But this country, it's too settled."

"Too settled, Bob. We'd better strike out—go farther West. Not so much water and feed, but more room."

"Right. An' look here, kid, we're not goin' to let our next range be spoiled by no —— nesters!"

SMILING

by Bill Adams

SIGH, if you must, lad!
Oh, weep, if you will!
There's heat and there's dust, lad,
On the road up the hill—
So you'll sigh, if you must, lad,
And you'll weep, if you will.

Think you can smile, lad?
Oh, say that you will:
Though there's heat, and there's dust, lad,
On our climb up the hill—
Oh, come give me a smile, lad,
As we tramp the long hill,
Sure, *I'm* smiling—
That's Bill.

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WOODCRAFT

by Raymond S. Spears

THE supreme type of American woodsmen appears to have been found in the Ohio Valley during and just after the American Revolution of 1776-81. Here was the greatest forest on the continent, here the greatest need of supreme woods ability, and here the white race developed its utmost timber wilderness tact. By woodcraft, we mean the ability to take care of one's self in the woods, and to utilize natural conditions to the utmost in life, living and ambitions.

Lewis Wetzel was perhaps the ablest woodsman of them all. He knew the language of the woods so well that he could toll an Indian up by mocking a turkey-gobbler—and kill the Indian. He entered the woods with his rifle, knife and tomahawk, flint and ammunition, to live on what was there—all wild meats, nuts, berries and other provender. He clothed himself in the skins, and earned his money shooting animals for their meat, killing Indians for bounty and selling hides.

He could start from a tree with his flintlock empty, race at top speed, and turn at a hundred feet or so and shoot on the instant, plumbing the center. He repeatedly attacked bands of Indians single-handed, and as they chased him shot them down till the word went through the tribes that he had a gun that was always loaded. His battle cry was—

"It's Lewis Wetzel!"

From it Indians fled in the night. In raw late Autumn, Wetzel built a fire in a hole, covered it with damp earth, and sitting wrapped in his blanket, slept on the warm mound—with no flames to betray his presence. His agility and strength made him feared by all bullies.

His hate of Indians changed his status; from being the most admired, he became the most despised of that frontier. Captured by Indians, condemned to death back in the Ohio country, an old Indian pleaded for Wetzel's life, wanting to adopt the white as his son. Failing, because Wetzel had killed so many Indians, the Indian at night cut Wetzel's bonds, as he lay condemned to fire at dawn. Wetzel crept away with the Indian, who returned his rifle and other arms.

The old Indian rode a horse, leading Wetzel through a safe trail to a creek. Here the rescuer bade the freed woodsman good-by. As the Indian was about to take his departure, Wetzel shot him dead and took his horse and scalp, to return in triumph to the Ohio bank settlements. He boasted of his deed, as he had bragged of scores of other Indian kills.

He had killed the man who saved his life! Even the lust for Indian blood in the valley could not stand that. A wave of resentment swept down the valley. The hero was unable to cope with that feeling. He left the country, going down near Natchez, where he died at the age of about forty years. His skill was never forgotten, for it was displayed at the peak of the need of white woodcraft against Indian woodcraft—which was not so good, at its best.

Before he died, the Ohio Valley was a farmland, though vast areas still were grown to timber. The Poes, Boone, Conrad—many great men ranged the wilderness; but not one equaled in sheer woodcraft this one hundred-and-forty-pound, dark-skinned, black-eyed, long-haired moccasin snake of the gloomy treachery of the tall timber. Of all Wetzel's feats, perhaps his swimming the Ohio in handcuffs was the greatest—he had killed from the brush a gentle, peace-loving Indian on the way to a peace conference with Government officials. He ran away from an armed guard, crossed the Ohio at night—and resumed his Indian killing.

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The Story of the Khalifa

An Incident in the Affairs of Mohamed Ali

by

GEORGE E. HOLT

Author of "A Matter of Title," "Checkmate," etc.

NOW it will be remembered that when Mohamed Ali's enemies gained the upper hand and overthrew him and his venerable friend and patron, the Vizier Baghdadi, Mohamed Ali found it desirable to evacuate the basha's residence and offices with the utmost expedition. Mohamed Ali had been warned by the vizier concerning the *coup* which their enemies were about to spring, in order that he might seek safety in flight; and he in turn had immediately notified such of his own followers as he could reach, in order that they also might make their escapes. Such is the custom of official life in Morocco; and it has its merits.

Among these friends of Mohamed Ali were certain ones to whom, as *basha*, he had assigned various offices of trust. Prominent among these was his *khalifa*—an officer occupying somewhat the same position with respect to the *basha*, that a lieutenant-governor occupies in relation to a governor. Also there were his first, second and third secretaries, who, however, were known as the first, second, and third scribes, and the chief of the palace guards.

Being a man of wisdom and a politician of experience, Mohamed Ali had known, from the hour he had taken office, that his departure from that office—whenever Allah should will—would in all probability be accomplished most speedily, either by the hand of death, or by the victory of his enemies.

Hence he had made plans which, in the event of his death, would not leave his family, relatives and friends destitute, and in the event of his being deposed, would not leave his political archives—which were most damaging to a number of people, and therefore most valuable—or his treasure, to fall into the hands of his enemies and to be used by them against him. In order to carry out these plans with precision and dispatch, certain emergency duties had been assigned to, and accepted by, each of those proven friends and official subordinates whom I have mentioned—the *khalifa*, the first scribe, the second scribe, the third scribe, and the chief of the palace guards. To each of these, in accordance with his degree, Mohamed Ali had entrusted archives or treasure or official seals, and the responsibility of making escape and protecting that which had been entrusted until he, Mohamed Ali, finding the time propitious, should summon them to give report of their trusts and to plan with them for the discomfiture of their mutual enemies.

Now that time had come. Mohamed Ali had received from his friend and patron, the ex-Vizier Baghdadi, a poetic message concerning the blossoming of the iris and

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the white narcissus upon the foot-hills of the Atlas. Upon receipt of this Mohamed Ali had felt the elixir of Springtime in his veins and had sent forth, through channels, a summons to those whom he had trusted—to a gathering in a certain humble village among the Anghera hills.

So far as he knew, all of his five friends were at liberty, with the exception of the first scribe. Him he knew to be imprisoned in the *casbah* in Tangier. But Mohamed Ali, upon a recent unostentatious visit to that city, had not only ascertained this fact, but had rendered, he thought, a certain service to that mysterious black magician who called himself the Master of the *Djinnoon*, and had taken advantage of the opportunity to suggest to this king of the spirit world a course of action which, he felt, might result in strange things happening in the *casbah* of Tangier.

And of the others, one already had reached the rendezvous. Mohamed Ali squatted upon a big cushion, and across from him upon another cushion squatted Sid Aidomar, former *khalifa*. Compared to Mohamed Ali he was a small man, but obviously no weakling. Compared to his master, also, he was dark of face—black blood had been strong enough to darken his skin, but not strong enough to coarsen the fine Arab features. Black eyes under heavy black eyebrows, a black, curly, close-cropped beard, gave him something of a Mephistophelian appearance, added to somewhat by a crescent-shaped white scar which curved from the corner of his right eye to the middle of the cheek.

The *khalifa* took from the leather bag which hung about his neck beneath his *sulham*, a large package carefully wrapped in double envelopings of cloth and leather, and with a smile laid it at Mohamed Ali's feet. Mohamed Ali, knowing the contents, smiled and nodded with satisfaction. Then his eyes rested upon the face of his *khalifa*—upon, in fact, the white scar.

The thin dark hand of the *khalifa* touched it swiftly and lightly.

"It is a new acquisition," he said.

"Connected with this?" asked Mohamed Ali, and pointed at the package.

The *khalifa* nodded assent.

"And the tale?" asked Mohamed Ali, settling himself comfortably among his cushions.

"It is of little importance, *sidi*," replied the *khalifa*, "except that it points the moral that education is not to be encouraged among certain classes."

"Hmph! That I have always known," answered Mohamed Ali. "But—the one in question?"

"This: Had a certain basha lacked all learning, it might not have occurred to him that the incident of Daniel in the lions' den should be worth repeating. In which case I should not have become a modern Daniel—even though, lacking lions, he had to use tigers. Hence this scar."

"My interest having been aroused—" Mohamed Ali smiled gently—"my ears are open. This sounds indeed like something new."

"So he thought," agreed the *khalifa*. "However—if it is an order—the story is thus: When word from you reached me in my home that immediate flight was desirable, it became necessary for me to return to my office to secure these archives. That I did easily enough in the garments of a common guard. In these same garments I escaped from the city, and without much difficulty reached the house of a cousin in Neknez. It was my thought in going to this place, within half a day's ride of Fez, the capital, that I might more easily keep in touch with events as they came to pass. In this I was not mistaken. For many months I remained there without being disturbed, taking, of course, precautions not to attract attention to my existence. And then, one day, while I was sitting harmlessly in the shop of a maker of slippers, I was seized by two *maghaznis* and dragged before the *basha*."

"Sid el-Hadi?" asked Mohamed Ali.

"Sid el-Hadi," echoed the *khalifa*. "Friend of the Sultan, and Mohamed Ali's enemy.

"Now this was inconvenient, of course. However, at worst it could be only a question of my own life, because I had hidden the archives with which I had been entrusted in the shrine of Mulai Yacoub of which the custodian is your father's cousin. There I knew they would be safe until I should go to fetch them. The question now was whether it would ever be possible for me to do so. An evil-minded brute, the *basha* of Meknez! Or rather, I should say, the former *basha*."

"Former? I had not heard."

"That, also," said the *khalifa*, "is part of the story. Very well. As I say, I was

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dragged before the *basha*, who first had me searched and then dispatched soldiers to search the house of my cousin, while by threats he tried to induce me to tell him where I had hidden the package. He spoke as if with positive knowledge that I had had some such thing. It is possible that some one had seen me in my office in Tangier, and so reported. However, I was thrown into the *casbah*, and, after his men had searched my cousin's house without results, was again brought before him to listen to further threats.

"Now, Sid Mohamed, it is not in my blood to be afraid of words, and I think I laughed at him. Yes, I am sure I did. And thereupon he became as a madman. What—what have you done to make him such an enemy of ours?"

"Enough, perhaps," answered Mohamed Ali, shortly.

"So I judged," continued the *khalifa*. "So I judged. He was kind enough to tell me what he would like to do to you. It was not pleasant. He had an imagination—as you shall see.

"Now, in some manner he caused me to give him some good advice. At least I thought it was good. And then the result of a little learning became apparent. 'A Daniel!' he cried and glared at me. 'A modern Daniel. Allah, such wisdom! A Daniel——'

"And then I could see, through his eyes, an idea being born in the fire within his head. Shortly, I was again dragged off to the *casbah*, and there I lay for a week, wondering about the idea I had seen born.

"On the morning of the seventh day thus, again came *maghaznis* who led me to the *basha*. And without delay he opened the door leading from his office, passed through it and motioned for us to follow. We went along a hall-way and came out upon the balcony of the patio of another house. It was a small patio, and the balcony ran around it at the height of the second story. I looked over into the patio and saw that it was boarded up to the second story floor, forming a box some twenty feet square and twelve feet deep, open at the top. Naturally I wondered what it meant—but I had not long to wait. The *basha* pulled a rope that ran over the balcony railing and a little door at one side of the patio swung open. Through the door two small tigers dashed and paused, blinking at the light."

The *khalifa* stopped to take a package of cigarets from his *shakarah* and to light one of them, with steady fingers.

"The purpose of the *basha* now became sufficiently obvious—even without his snarl of 'Daniel!' At first I was puzzled as to where he had gotten the tigers; then I remembered that the great Kaid Glawi had recently sent to the sultan a pair of cats. I judged that the worthy *basha* had borbowed them from his majesty. Smiling evilly, the *basha* looked at me and gave me a final chance to tell him that which he desired to know. It was a time for some quick thinking. Wherefore, a thought came to me. I drew near to the *basha*, a *maghazni* holding each of my wrists, and made as if to tell him that which he wished to know. I was afraid, *sidi*, and the *basha* saw it. And so I leaned toward him and began to whisper. That caused him to lean toward me. And then quickly I jerked both hands free from the grip of the *maghaznis*—who had grown careless—seized the *basha* and flung myself over the railing, carrying him with me. I remember crying as we fell—

"'Two Daniels!'

"Then came snarls and one of the big cats pounced upon us.

"What followed in the next few seconds is not clear to me. Distinct enough was the feel and smell of fur, the sound of the cats' snarls and a sharp stroke of pain across my face. Then, somehow, I found myself standing, with a tiger tearing at the *basha* at my feet, and the other animal slinking back into its cage. I remember hearing the two *maghaznis* shouting down the corridor. Looking about I saw the rope which ran from the door of the cage to the balcony, where it was tied. Chancing a spring from the cat within the cage, I seized the rope and clambered up until my feet rested on top of the door. Then came a snarl behind me—and somehow or other I went up the rope and over the balcony, leaving the animal spitting and cursing, hanging to the top of the door.

"Now you may be assured, *sidi*, that I wasted no time in looking back to observe the outcome of the fight between the *basha* and the tiger. I heard the *maghaznis* still shouting, wherefore I went hastily through a door which led in the opposite direction. Allah was watching over me, and very shortly, upon descending the stairway and

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passing through another door, I found myself in the *basha's* garden. And a moment later I was outside the garden and into the street.

"It was my desire then to put the city of Meknez behind me with all possible speed, and so I set off swiftly toward the Fez gate. But I had scarce taken a score of steps ere I heard an outcry behind me, and looking over my shoulder, saw guards running from the *basha's* garden toward me. Flight was my only chance—and that seemed a poor one. A few breaths took me to a little side street, down which I ran, but as I turned from it into yet another one, I heard the shouts of the guards behind me.

"Now a little way ahead of me an iron balcony projected from the window of a house, perhaps four feet above my head. This balcony was enclosed for two feet of its height, with tiles. I sprang, caught it, and threw myself over just as the pursuing guards turned the corner. It was fortunate for me that the street here broke into several branches—and also that the balcony was partially enclosed, for the tiles hid me from the street. I lay there while the guards ran past and into each of the branching streets. But, although I had found sanctuary for a moment, I knew that shortly they would be back to examine the street more carefully, and that then my hiding place was sure to be discovered.

"I turned to examine the iron shutters which guarded the window and at that moment they began to open slowly. I saw eves looking out, then the shutters were thrown open and a hurried hand seized me by the shoulder and drew me within. Consider my amazement, *sidi*, when my rescuer, having closed and barred the shutters, turned his face toward me, and I saw that he was no other than Sid Hamed Mortadi, your first scribe."

"The operations of Allah are beyond our understanding," offered Mohamed Ali. "Praised be the holy name of Allah! And thus you escaped, and came to Tangier with Sid Hamed?"

"Thus I escaped—but there is yet more to be told, *sidi*. The guards came again and scrutinized the balcony, but the iron shutters were locked, and Sid Hamed and I had gone to another place of which he knew, carefully leaving the door of his house open as a convenience to the guards. Eventually, therefore, they passed on, and we returned to his house. That night we disguised ourselves and set out upon mules for the house of a cousin of Sid Hamed, near Tangier. There we lay for some days, at the end of which time, misfortune fell upon your scribe and narrowly missed me, as well. Because of your orders it was necessary for me to leave him a prisoner in the *casbah* of Tangier—although otherwise assuredly I should have tried to aid him."

"That he was a prisoner, I knew," said Mohamed Ali. "But how he came to be so I do not know."

"It was a simple matter, *sidi*. At the time of our flight he had the custody, as you know, of certain seals and treasures. He found himself unable to escape from the palace with these, therefore he hid them in a secret place in the palace. In his attempt to regain them, by a daring impersonation of one of the *basha's* own *maghaznis*, he was detected and thrown into the *casbah*. And yet——"

A servant entered the room.

"Comes one who desires audience with Mohamed Ali," he said. "He gives the name of——"

But upon the heels of the servant came a travel-stained sweating man in a ragged gray *djellaba*, who raised a hand of respect to Mohamed Ali.

"Sid Hamed!" exclaimed the *khalifa*.

"My scribe!" cried Mohamed Ali.

"Yes, *sidi*, your scribe," assented the newcomer, taking from his *shakarah* a small parcel which he offered to Mohamed Ali. "And here," he added, "are those things for the safety of which I was responsible."

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The Slick Guy

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

by Frederick Moore

Author of "Jungle Eyes," "The Tiger Kid," etc.

IT WAS well into the afternoon when the man asleep under the shelter turned over and awoke. Below him, seen whitely through the immovable tops of the palm-trees, lay the curling combers on the beach. There was the silence of mid-day still over the land; and from the swamps at the narrowing end of the little bay which cut into the island there came a gentle movement of air which did not move the bushes, but carried the reek of tidal mud.

The shelter was rude, having been hastily constructed by leaning three poles against a brown hummock of earth, and piling across them dead palm-leaves. This thatch was not intended to protect against rain, though it would keep off the dampness of night and the sun of day. And it was so designed that it merged with the dry ground and underbrush in color and in shape. Seen from seaward, it would appear to be a part of the high ground, which was strewn with rocks along the ridge.

The man was about forty, and of heavy build. He had a snuff-colored mustache, trimmed rather short. He supported his chin on his hands, his elbows on the loose leaves which had served him for a bed. His face was broad and rough-hewn, and well-tanned, and covered with a stubble of brown beard. The light brown dust of the dry hillside had settled upon his cheeks and forehead, now lined by tiny runnels of sweat which had formed while he was aleep; these damp markings gave him the aspect of a tattooed native and added to the natural grimness of his heavy features.

He wore a light cotton shirt, stained by body moisture, and marked by stripes caused by pushing through muddy brush, as if he had made his way hastily through the mangrove swamps up the little river at the toe of the bay. His brown trousers were also discolored by black mud, which had dried, though he wore shoes which were clean, probably because he had changed his footwear without troubling to remove his muddy clothing.

He stared out now upon the sea, and his eyes squinted as if seeking something over the sun-shot, glassy surface of the water. Finding that part of the ocean which was visible before him from where he lay in the shelter to be clear of any vessel, he pulled himself forward on his elbows until the range of his vision was increased. Now he picked up a schooner, coming down the coast of the island, well off the land, and apparently steering a course which would bring her into the bay—at least she was standing in for the land, with enough breeze behind her to give her steerage way.

He scanned the schooner carefully. She

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had three masts, and was a dirty gray in color—probably had been white, for her bows looked as if they had just been painted, though the brown streakings below her scupper-line showed that her master was careless of her appearance.

The watcher smiled with satisfaction as he studied her. He seemed well-pleased that she was making in for the land.

"It's an even chance," he told himself, "that she's what I'm looking for. Yes, she's a stranger—good!"

He watched her a few minutes longer, and then deciding that the schooner intended to come into the bay, he drew back under the shelter and unwrapped a bundle which was covered with a rubber groundsheet. He took out a razor, a bottle of water, some soap and a brush, and, sitting cross-legged, shaved himself carefully. But he left a tuft of whiskers on his chin, which he shaped with scrupulous care, for this was something he obviously was not accustomed to saving when he used a razor on his face. He grinned at himself in a small pocket mirror when the tuft was trimmed to his satisfaction.

"Changes my looks a lot more than I thought it would," he remarked. "It'll fool anybody who never saw me close to—and that's all I want."

He washed his face with what was left of the water in the bottle, careless of splashing his trousers. When he had finished he took a clean white suit from his bundle, and changed into a new outfit. He found it difficult to make the change in his cramped position under the shelter, but he took pains not to expose himself to anybody who might be looking at the island from the schooner.

From the bundle he took a gold watch and chain, and so arranged the chain that it hung from the left pocket in the front of his shirt—hung in a loop which dangled a few inches from the top of the pocket. He unfolded a straw hat and put it on his head and, taking the bundle with him, crawled out from under the shelter on the end away from the schooner, where he had fairly good cover behind a ledge of rock. He watched the schooner from his covert behind the rock, and then, as if something had occurred to him which he had not thought of before, he fished the deserted soiled shirt and trousers out of the shelter with a stick, and buried them in a graveled spot, taking care not to raise any dust. The job finished, he covered the spot with a flat rock, taking the precaution of slanting it so that it would shed rain.

Once more he seemed to have a new idea, for he suddenly took off his white coat. He unwrapped the bundle again and took from it a peculiar harness-like combination of straps made from strips of canvas, and crudely stitched together where the strips joined. He put one of the loops over his head and drew a strap across his shoulders behind, which drew under his arms two small pockets made of the same material as the straps. Buckled to his body, the queer apparatus looked not unlike a pair of home-made suspenders. He was awkward with it, for he studied its fit carefully, and finally cut a slit in his shirt just behind each armpit, and the strap which ran across his breast he concealed from view by reeving it through the slits, and drawing it taut under the shirt.

From the bundle he took a pair of automatic pistols, made sure their magazines were full, and pouched them under his arms in the pockets of the harness. Now he put on his coat, and the small automatics were concealed. He fingered his loop of watch-chain, just under the left lapel of his coat, with his right hand, and found that when his right hand was in this position, he could draw the concealed pistol from under his arm by thrusting his hand back about three inches. He did this several times, until he was satisfied that he could produce a weapon with remarkable speed. He gave a grunt of satisfaction, picked up his bundle, and watched the schooner for a minute from behind the rock.

Presently he began to work down to lower ground, keeping in concealment from the seaward side by stooping behind the ridge of rocks, and the sparse brush which grew between them.

When he was about half-way down the slope he delayed for several minutes and studied the schooner again. Now he was convinced that she was coming into the bay, and moved openly into the trail which led down to the flats of the coconut-grove, and, depositing his bundle behind a rock, lighted a cigar and sauntered into sight through the grove.

He stopped in plain sight of anybody who might be looking from the schooner. Now she was not more than five hundred

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yards from the shore-line. The sails were coming down, and the schooner was barely under way, the master evidently waiting until he had gained every foot possible inside the bay. The man in the grove could see natives on the forecastle-head, as if waiting for the word to drop the anchor.

The man walked down to the strip of sand, and along it, as if he was now as eager to be seen as he had been anxious up in his shelter to remain hidden. He raised an arm and made a gesture to the schooner, which was neither a welcome nor an objection to her entrance into the bay. A man who stood beside the wheel, wearing a light shirt, returned the silent salute.

By this time the man ashore could make out the name of the schooner on her bow—*Mariveles*. And just as the ripples from her sides washed the still water of the beach at the feet of the watcher, the anchor went down, and a native crew turned their attention to getting overside a longboat, with a pair of water casks.

"Looks as if he's come in just for fresh water," mused the man in the coconut-grove, "and he's been here before, or he wouldn't anchor where he has the hidden spring dead abeam."

He turned and looked over his shoulder at a spot in behind the trees, where a spring bubbled out of the rock. The water being dissipated in a gravelly bed, there was no way by which a stranger could detect the location of the spring from the bay. As the man had remarked, the master of the *Mariveles* was not on a blind hunt—he had knowledge of where the spring would be found.

The man ashore smoked quietly, while the longboat was rowed in by native sailors. Sitting in the stern sheets was the same man who had been seen directing the movements of the schooner—obviously the skipper.

As the boat was swung and backed in stern first, just when her keel grounded on the hard shingle, the man on shore walked with leisurely stride to the water's edge.

The skipper sprang ashore.

"Didn't expect to find anybody here," he remarked in mild surprize, staring at the man in white.

The master of the schooner was of angular body and uncouth aspect. A stubby black mustache, not much longer than the short black hair that covered his cheeks and his bare throat, decorated his face. He had black eyes that peered out from circles of wrinkles in his sunbaked skin, and a big nose, rutted with smallpox scars.

He stood for an instant, knees slightly bent, and his long, hairy, hooked hands by his sides. As he remained standing in his crouching attitude, he was almost gorilla-like, for he was stoop-shouldered, and his head, covered with a dirty, visored cap, was thrust forward as if in challenge. He wore a shirt of light-colored stuff, the sleeves rolled up, showing the strong forearms blotched here and there with old, blue tattoo-marks. His trousers were of faded khaki, and much too voluminous for his spare legs, which were visible half-way to his knees, the trousers being rolled up. Gray socks were wrinkled about his ankles, and his brown cloth shoes were wet, for the longboat leaked from being sun-dried.

"And I didn't expect to find a schooner in here," countered the man in white. "I don't often get over on this side, but I wanted to look over the sago swamps up the river valley."

"My name's Carlson," said the skipper, and pulling out a black plug of tobacco from his trousers pocket, gave it a critical glance, and with a motion that suggested a terrier tearing at a bone, bit off a portion. Then he turned and spoke to his native sailors in a kindly tone—a tone and manner surprizingly at variance with what might be expected from a man who had every appearance of being ruthless and cruel.

"You're the skipper, I presume," said the man in white.

"Sure I'm the skipper!" retorted Carlson. "And what's more I *own* her!"

He spoke the last words with sudden fierceness—almost as if he expected that his claim would be questioned. He turned again, and pointed out the direction of the spring to his men, saying something in a native tongue.

"You'll find that's good water," said the man in white.

"So I've heard," said Carlson. "It ain't that I'm *out* of water, but what we've got seems to make us all sick. I been pretty weak for ten days or more myself—look at me—I've just let myself go to wrack and ruin till I look like the wreck of the *Hesperus*," and he grinned broadly, showing brown teeth. "I give a good imitation of a dock-rat," he added, as if he enjoyed disparaging his appearance.

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"Where are you bound for—and where from?" asked the man in white.

The question was such an abrupt change of subject that Captain Carlson seemed taken aback. He gave the questioner a quick glance, and then let his eyes drift away. His lips moved, and he appeared at a loss for an answer. He covered his hesitation with a convulsive movement of his body forward, and spat a stream of brown liquid on the sand—with violence. He wiped his lips with the back of a hand, and said with what might be taken for a natural casualness—

"From Billiton Island—for Manila—in ballast."

As if to avoid further questioning, he abruptly strode away in the direction of the spring. As he went, he grumbled something about having told a lot about himself without getting much information in exchange.

The man in white followed after him, a good-natured grin on his face, as if he felt no resentment at being left to himself without another word. He walked slowly, but with a determined manner, as if the schooner's master could not escape so easily, whether or not he had been offended.

"It's the best water hereabouts," remarked the man in white, as he came up with Carlson at the spring. Here the native sailors were bailing water from the gravelly depression which formed a small pool, and filling the casks through a funnel which gurgled merrily, while a ringing sound came from the insides of the casks.

The seamen made way for the captain. He stood for a minute looking at the pool, which was slightly roiled from the movement of the buckets. Then, without any reply to the man who had followed him, Carlson cupped his hands under the trickle from the cleft rock, and filled them with water. In this way he drank, noisily and untidily.

"It ought to be good water," he remarked presently. "Right out of the shale."

He moved to one side and sat down, a great paw of a hand clapped over each knee, while he stared reflectively at his schooner, visible through the palm-trees.

"Have you ever been over to the plantation on the other side of the island?" asked the man in white. It seemed to be a peculiarity of his to abandon the subject under discussion, and begin on an entirely new tack.

Carlson looked at him in surprize.

"What plantation?" he asked.

The other turned slightly and pointed over his shoulder with his thumb in the direction of the river-swamps.

"Up the river, and in the valley on the other side."

"Oh, no," said the skipper. "I've heard there was one on this island, but I've never been there. Don't schooners bound for there find anchorage on the other side?"

"Some do," said the man in white. "It depends on what they want—sometimes lumber, or rattans, are floated down the river, and loaded here."

"What's the name of the man who owns the planatation?" asked Carlson, lifting his cap to the back of his head, and with the fingers of the same hand scratching his head while he made a grimace that indicated an attempt to recover something lost to memory. Then, before the other could reply, added, "Seems to me I've heard the name—Blanchard—or something like that."

"That's it," said the man in white. "Have you ever seen Blanchard?"

Carlson shot another sidewise, bird-like glance at his questioner. "I wouldn't have any special reason to see him," he replied, "unless I carried a cargo for him, or something like that. But I've never had any truck with him—seeing as I've never been to this island before."

He made a gesture with his big hands, as if that were proof enough that he had no acquaintance with the owner of the plantation they had just referred to.

"Well, I happen to be Blanchard," said the man in white, and smiled, as if he had prepared for this joke—and surprize.

Carlson blinked his eyes rapidly.

"You are?" he said. "Why, I—I suppose you are."

Blanchard laughed, but nevertheless he was watching Carlson's eyes with more interest than he betrayed.

"Suppose I am!" he gurgled. "That's good! When I tell you who I am, you suppose——"

He broke off and slapped his leg as he laughed again, and shook his head.

"What I mean," said Carlson, "was that I half-thought so all the time. I'd heard there was only one white man on the island—and he owned the plantation. I suppose that it seemed kind of funny to find you

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over on this side of the island—and all alone. Yes, of course, you're Mr. Blanchard."

"Oh, it's natural enough for me to be here," said Blanchard soberly. "I had an idea a schooner might go past on this side. Anyway, I wanted to look my sago swamp over, and took a walk this way, at the same time keeping an eye out for a schooner—and you dropped in—for water."

He gave Carlson a queer, searching look as he talked with deliberate slowness, putting a peculiar significance into his reference to the possibility of schooners passing on this side of his island. But whatever covert meaning it was that Blanchard intended to convey, Carlson did not grasp any hidden thought—at least, he gave no betrayal of having understood more than was said.

"What, you looking for a schooner? Have you got a cargo?" he asked with sudden interest.

"No," said Blanchard. "I wish I had—seeing you're in ballast, and for Manila."

"Then why was you looking out for schooners?" demanded Carlson, as if he was nettled at Blanchard's roundabout way of expressing himself. He had no leaning for trivial conversation, yet appeared to be willing to talk, considering the island of the planter was supplying him with fresh water.

"Because I was thinking of going to Manila myself," said Blanchard. "Do you suppose you could give me passage? I brought a small bundle along with me—duds and so on—in case I saw a vessel—bound for Manila."

Once more he gave Carlson that searching look, as if he expected the skipper to show surprize—or flee in alarm at what was told him.

"Sure, I can give you passage," said Carlson promptly. "When my casks are aboard, I'll send the boat back for you," and he made a gesture to the sailors to roll a cask that was filled down to the beach.

"All right, that settles it," said Blanchard. "I'll go for my bundle back on the trail—and be with you when you're ready."

He turned and walked away, hurrying to the higher ground. But when he was under cover of some bushes he stopped and looked back at the sailors rolling the cask to the beach, and Carlson at their heels.

"I believe he's a first-class liar, for all his pretense of being an innocent sort of dub," mused Blanchard. "And I'll bet my hat he's suspicious—and that he'll leave that other cask where it is, and sail out."

He stood watching, and smiled grimly as he saw Carlson enter the longboat after the cask was loaded, and order the boat rowed out to the *Mariveles*—with all the sailors.

"He knows there's something wrong," said Blanchard to himself. "I should have gone at him differently—straight out, without so much beating about—and taken my chances. He seemed innocent enough—until I told him my name was Blanchard, but from that on he looked pretty rattled."

ARRIVING alongside the schooner, Carlson ordered his men to have the cask slung aboard, and then cautioned them not to return to shore for the other cask until he was ready to return with them in the longboat.

With that—and he spoke to his men in low tones even though he used their own dialect—he went over the side and hurried aft to the main cabin of the schooner. As he entered through the passage, here was a man in a white suit, who was stretched on a cushioned locker, propped up on pillows in such manner that he got a light down through the companionway full upon a book he was reading. The man looked up.

"Finished with the water already?" he asked.

"Got another cask ashore," said Carlson, and sat down at the table, facing the man on the locker.

"I'd rather not go ashore in the heat," said the other. "I thought you'd lay in here until along toward dusk—when it's cooler, anyway."

He was a man of light, rangy frame, and his clothes were well pressed and well cut, his feet being shod with clean white shoes, and his ankles covered with white silk socks. His hair was naturally black, but graying over the ears. His face was tanned, the upper part of his forehead having the band of white common to men accustomed to the tropics—untanned skin covered by the curve of a sun-helmet. His face was thin, and his pale blue eyes uncommonly shrewd. A tiny ribbon hung down from under his coat collar, and from the ribbon dangled a pair of gold-trimmed *pince-nez*. He put these on now, and looked at Carlson over them, depressing his head so that his smoothly shaven chin rested on the front of

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his open shirt. He looked prosperous—a man of business affairs.

"Oh, I'm in no hurry," said Carlson easily. "You're the doctor, and if you want to pay me to lay in here all day, it makes no difference. I could take you around the other side——"

"No use to do that," said the man lying on the locker. "I would just as soon go across to the plantation through the trail, even in the heat of day. I'd just as soon take it easy in here, as to be beating around the island for the other side—and go across in the evening on land."

"You know best," said Carlson.

"See anybody ashore?" asked the man on the locker. "Any natives about—any hunters or diggers of turtle eggs?"

"Yes, I seen somebody," said Carlson, with a grin. "And I got something to tell you—something funny."

"Funny!" snapped the other, and sat up. "What could you see that's funny?"

Carlson broke out into a guffaw of laughter.

"Oh, it's funny all right—funniest thing I ever seen—or heard," he persisted. "A white man—walking around in the palm-grove——"

He gave way again to unrestrained laughter, so that he was not able to go on with his explanation.

The other swung round abruptly and slapped the soles of his shoes on the deck with a bang.

"A white man!" he exclaimed, staring at Carlson in amazement. "Why, there's nobody on the island that's white—at this time!"

"Yes, there is!" insisted Carlson. "And all dressed up in duck—and he wants to go along to Manila with me—and he—he says——"

He laughed once more, long and gurglingly, slapping his hand on the table over and over, as if the humor of the discovery ashore rendered him helplessly convulsed.

"Yes, what did he say? Come on with it!" demanded the man on the locker, somewhat annoyed.

"He said—his name—was Blanchard!" gasped out Carlson.

At the name, the other sprang to his feet, giving a cry of stifled amazement. His *pince-nez* fell from his nose, his hands were gripped into fists, and his whole body shook as if he had been taken with a fit of ague.

"Blanchard!" he exclaimed. "Why, that's impossible!"

"I'm telling you what he said!" insisted Carlson, soberly, for he had been startled by the violence of the other man's denial that there could be anybody on the island named Blanchard. "And if you don't believe me, you don't have to take my word for it. He says he wants to come aboard—and I told him he could. So if you want to, you'll have a chance to listen to him himself. I ain't trying to put anything over on you—it's straight goods I'm talking."

"He's coming aboard!" said the other. "What the —— are you bringing him aboard for?"

"He said he wanted to go to Manila—like I just told you. And I thought it'd be a good idea to tell him he could come—but I knew you'd want to know first—that's what I'm doing—posting you on what's up."

"Oh, it's all right," said the other man, mollified now, but still amazed, and evidently trying to think up some way of dealing with a situation which was totally unexpected.

He backed to the locker and sat down, where he continued to stare at the skipper. Carlson was again enjoying the surprize of the other, being the type of man who gets pleasure out of startling people—the type which enjoys a disaster if they can have the telling of its news.

"You mean it's all right for this man to say his name is Blanchard?" asked Carlson, now amazed himself.

"No, no!" was the reply. "What I mean is that you did the right thing to tell him he could come aboard—and then let me know about it."

"That's what I thought," said the skipper. "He took me for kind of a fool, but——"

"Of all the nervy things I've ever heard of!" broke in the other man, and he began to pace back and forth across the cabin, hands behind his back, head bent in thought.

After several minutes of this, he shook a fist at Carlson, and with his mouth twisted in anger, cried again:

"Of all the impudence! Of all the *gall!*"

"I thought so myself," said Carlson. "But what struck me in my funny bone, was that there should be two of you named Blanchard, Mr. Blanchard."

"Funny!" raged Blanchard. "Why, man,

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it's serious! That chap you found ashore is up to mischief—or has been! I can't figure out this minute, just what he's been up to, but I think I know. And I've got to find out what's at the bottom of it! I'll wring his neck!"

His words flowed with a swiftness, and he spoke with an uncontrolled intensity, that verged upon the hysterical; and as he talked, he kept pounding the cabin-table with the flat of his hand, as if eager to drive home every point into the brain of the dull-minded skipper.

"I don't want no trouble aboard me," said Carlson. "If you——"

"Listen to me!" pleaded Blanchard. "If I was to come on board your schooner while you was away, and claim to be the owner, don't you suppose that when you discovered it, you'd have sense enough to know I was up to crookedness? That I was your enemy? That I meant to steal your property, or run away with it? I'll bet you'd try to stop me!"

Carlson's face hardened, and a look of anger swept over it. He was impressed by the idea, and his arms drew up, while he clenched his fists, as if for conflicts with the imaginary interloper who would dare to take over his schooner.

"Yes, I see it now, Mr. Blanchard," he admitted gravely. "I didn't git just that angle on this affair—but I knew from the jump there was something off color about that chap ashore. He acted queer—and underhand."

"How do you mean queer?"

"Well, he took me for a fool because I looked so rusty. And he asked me a lot of questions—about whether I'd ever been to the plantation and so on—but he never told me nothing about himself until I told him I'd never seen the owner of the plantation. The minute I told him that, he told me he was *you*."

"That was when he put his foot in it," said Blanchard. "Now, we've got to let him come aboard."

Carlson stared in surprize.

"You mean aboard here?" he demanded. "What for?"

"We've got to find out his game."

"But if he sees you—he'll know his game is finished."

"What if he does?" countered Blanchard. "Certainly, I want to stop his going around on my island pretending he's the owner. He may not know me—may not recognize me—maybe has never seen me. In that case, I'll string him along and find out what he has to say for himself. It'll be fun to hear him talk, and call himself Blanchard."

"He'll make trouble," objected Carlson. "You'll be mad, and go after him hot and heavy, and maybe shoot him."

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" said Blanchard. "It'll be just a joke, in a way, unless he's a crook. It may be that he just wants to beat his way to Manila on you, on the strength of passing himself off as the planter here. You know schooner skippers do a man a favor when they think it means business with a cargo now and then. He got to my island, found I was gone, and thought you wouldn't know the difference. That's why he asked you if you knew me, or had ever been to the plantation."

He was grinning now, eager to impress the skipper with the fact that there might be nothing wrong beyond a desire to get free passage to Manila—anything to get the man ashore on board the schooner.

"No, I'll tell him I can't take him," said Carlson stubbornly.

Blanchard considered a moment.

"Captain," he began again, "if this man is really a crook, you'll be responsible to the authorities if you let him slip out of my hands. It's your duty to pick him up——"

"You go ashore and fight it out with him," said Carlson. "I can't have a row aboard me, and——"

"What if he should kill me?" demanded Blanchard. "Then you'd be held responsible for that! And he might kill somebody else after that. Just think this over—he's been prowling around on my island while I was away—and I've got some valuable stuff there—pearls and cash and so on. Of course, my natives should have run him off the place, but you know natives. He's probably strung 'em with some story that I've sent him there to wait for me. And maybe on that he got into my plantation-house, looted at leisure, and skipped to this side of the island. Don't you see? If he was straight he wouldn't have to cross the island—he'd stick on the plantation side and signal for a boat to come in, or wait for me to come home. But he knew he'd have a good chance of running into some skipper on that side who'd know me, and that would prevent him from claiming to be me. In

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any event, my natives would know the name of the boat he left by, and I'd be able to chase him. So he came all the way to this side—through fourteen miles of jungle and swamp, to catch a schooner that was not accustomed to putting in at my plantation."

"Well, he did say he'd come to this side to pick up a schooner," admitted Carlson. "But he didn't look like he'd come through any swamps. His shoes were clean, and he had on a white suit, and looked clean and shaved."

"Have anything with him? Suitcase or anything?"

"Said he had a bundle back on the trail. He went for it."

"There you are, captain! Now, as a shipmaster, you're responsible in some degree to the authorities, in this case. You can't let him slip out of your fingers!"

"But what can I do?" objected Carlson. "It ain't my business to arrest crooks, and I don't——"

"You don't have to do anything," said Blanchard. "If he doesn't know me by sight, we'll pretend I'm a passenger from Java. I'll get chummy with him. You know there's a coast-guard cutter lying at anchor at Weygant Island, where we've just come from. All right. Run over there during the night while he's asleep and thinks he's on his way to Manila. Then we'll turn him over to the cutter."

Carlson scratched his head, puzzled and worried. "But that'll take time—and cost me——"

"I'll pay you for your time," insisted Blanchard. "Just pass me off on him as a man of the name of—er—Stannard."

"Oh, I can't remember—I'd spill the business by coming out with your name——"

"Well, I'm the man aboard your schooner. Call me 'Shipman.' You can remember that."

"I guess so," said Carlson. "But I don't want trouble aboard. If we can take him to Weygant Island, as you say, all right—but no shooting."

"On my word of honor, no shooting," said Blanchard. "Of course, if I have to defend myself——"

Carlson rose, dubious and uncertain.

"I guess you'd have to defend yourself, yes," he admitted. "But don't start nothing."

He picked up his cap and settled it on his head with infinite care, as if he dreaded going back ashore.

"I promise you I'll avoid trouble as far as I can," said Blanchard earnestly. "And remember—introduce me as Shipman."

"But suppose when he sees you first off, he knows you."

"He mustn't see me first off. Bring him in and sit him at the cabin-table here, facing aft. I'll be able to see him through a ventilator-hole in my cabin. I'll look him over while he talks with you, and if I don't know him, it's a good bet he won't know me. And if I don't recognize him, I'll come out and say I've been having a nap—not feeling very well—the water, you know."

Carlson nodded, and moved forward through the passage to the fore-deck. The instant he was out of sight, Blanchard went to his cabin, drew a revolver from his back pocket, ran his thumb over the blued cylinder caressingly, snicked the cylinder out into the palm of his hand and made sure it was fully loaded.

"Carlson is in for the surprize of his life," he remarked, and snicked the weapon together again with an expressive click.

BY THE time Carlson reached shore, Blanchard was on the beach, waiting, his bundle on the sand beside him. He was smoking a cigar as he sat on a hummock of broken rocks he had built up for a seat.

"Sorry I had to keep you waiting," said Carlson. "Had a few things to look after—my passenger ain't feeling very good."

Blanchard's eyes narrowed slightly, and he opened his mouth to speak, but uttered no sound. He put the cigar he held in his hand between his teeth and the skin across his jaws drew taut. He looked out over the bay, and then turned on Carlson again with a quick bird-like twist of his head.

"Oh, you have a passenger already, eh?" he inquired.

"Yes, from Java," said Carlson. "He's a planter there—or a superintendent, maybe."

He got out of the boat, and stood slouching, his arms akimbo, while his seamen went after the cask at the spring.

"Name is Shipman."

"From Java, eh?" repeated Blanchard, a dreamy look in his eyes. "Don't know that I've heard that name before—Shipman—not as a Java man, anyhow."

"Well, he's a nice man—good spoken and

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prosperous," said the skipper. "He don't put on any dog, but anybody can see he's got plenty of money."

"Oh, no doubt, no doubt," said Blanchard, with sudden agreeableness. "I don't question his standing—it's just that I didn't recall the name."

"You'll like him, right enough," went on Carlson.

"Certainly, we'll get along," said Blanchard.

"Sorry to keep you waiting here in the heat," said Carlson again, as if at a loss for conversation.

"Oh, that's all right," said Blanchard quietly. "I was just loafing it. No hurry."

Carlson sat down on the stern-board of the boat and picked his teeth meticulously with a bit of palm-fiber.

"If you got any cargo for Manila, and you ain't in no hurry, I could go round your side of the island and pick it up," he suggested.

Blanchard looked out over the bay, as if considering.

"I don't know that there's enough to pay just now," he replied evasively. "But I'll tell you what's come into my mind since you went back aboard—I may charter you in Manila for six months, or more. I've got a lot of machinery up there that I need to bring down, and by the time we get back there'll be a lot of hemp stripped, and ready for market. Are you open for a charter?"

"Sure I am!" said Carlson. "And I'll give you a good rate, too, Mr. Blanchard, just to have my schooner kept busy regular."

Blanchard turned and looked over his shoulder at the seamen at the cask in the palm-grove.

"I want to suggest something else to you—but first I wanted to make sure you'd take a charter."

"All right, go ahead," said Carlson, chewing his palm-fiber.

Blanchard opened his mouth to resume, but hesitated, looking into the skipper's eyes as if gauging what reaction might be expected from the proposal he was about to make. "I hope I can trust you," he said presently.

"Why, sure," said Carlson. "What's on your mind?"

Blanchard stood up, and began to cut a rut in the sand with the toe of his shoe, shaping the marking carefully with the sole, as if considering how to begin what he wanted to say.

"It's like this," he began. "I've got a deal on in Manila that means a lot to me—and I'm not expected up there at this time—that is, the people concerned think I'm on my island, understand?"

"Why, yes," said Carlson. "That's plain enough for anybody."

"I've found I've got to attend to this business in person," resumed Blanchard. "You know how it is in business—I've got to see if the people I'm dealing with are all right—whether or not they can carry out in Manila what they represent to me they can by letters. If they're not responsible——"

He paused, and looked at Carlson doubtfully, as if not sure the skipper would approve of what was coming next.

"Oh, that's all right," said the skipper easily. "I can keep my mouth shut."

"It's not that so much," objected Blanchard. "I don't care if they know I'm in Manila—a day or so after I get there. In fact I'll call on 'em myself."

"You kind of want to look 'em up on the quiet first, is that it?" asked Carlson, with a knowing grin.

"Exactly!" said Blanchard heartily. "I see you understand. Well, it may leak out that I've arrived in Manila before I've had a chance to get ashore and look things over. You know how the newspapers are. If we get in before sunset, and a reporter comes out with the boarding officer, why, the paper the next morning'll say I came in with you as a passenger. Now, that's what I want to avoid, if I can."

"Don't see how you can do it, unless you hide when we get into Manila," said Carlson.

"Oh, I don't want to hide!" said Blanchard, slightly shocked at the idea. "But if my name—well, this passenger of yours—suppose he told somebody around the Manila Hotel that I'd come up in the same schooner with him? That would leak things on me. You know how information gets around."

"Then we'd better ask Mr. Shipman not to say anything," suggested Carlson.

"I don't like to do that," said Blanchard. "Of course, if you've already told him——"

"I ain't said a word," interjected Carlson. "He ain't been feeling well—the water—and when I went aboard, he was asleep in his room. I didn't wake him."

Blanchard made a gesture of satisfaction with his cigar—a kind of "That settles it"

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which was unspoken. He picked up his bundle and moved toward the boat.

"Then you don't have to tell this—Shipman, do you?" he asked. "He doesn't need to know I'm Blanchard at all. I can be, say, a hemp buyer from Manila. Yes, that'll do fine. And my name—let's see——"

"What's the matter with Landers?" said Carlson with a twinkle in his eye. "You've come from land, you know, and I'll be able to remember it better, than if you made up some other name."

"That's good," said Blanchard. "I hope you don't mind my wanting to keep who I am quiet."

"You're the doctor on that," said Carlson. "I don't see that it's anybody's business but your own."

"That's the way I look at it," said the other. "Not that I'd do anything to get you in any trouble, understand, Captain Carlson."

"Oh, you can't git me in any trouble," said Carlson. "As I've said, if you want to be known by another name, that's your own business. Anyway, I ain't going to charge you nothing to go to Manila—you're my guest—so I don't have to report your arrival as a passenger. And come to that, as long as I know you're Blanchard, one name is as good as another to me for this trip up."

"I'm glad you look at it so sensibly."

"And as I don't know Blanchard anyway, your name might be anything, come to that," said Carlson.

Blanchard dropped his bundle, and bent to pick it up. While he stooped over it, he asked—

"You haven't any doubts about my real name, have you?" There was irritation in the tone.

"Oh, no!" Carlson hastened to say. "I didn't mean any offense, Mr. Blanchard."

"Landers!" snapped the other. "You'd better begin to call me that now."

And as he straightened up, the bundle held in one hand by the cord, his right hand holding the loop of watch-chain swinging from his left-hand shirt pocket, he went on more quietly:

"If you've got any doubts about my name, I might as well stay ashore. There'll be a schooner I know of along this way in a week—a skipper who does considerable business for me now and then. He'll take me to Manila. Besides, I don't want to plan a charter with you, if you've any doubts about who you're doing business with."

Carlson laughed uneasily.

"I didn't mean anything when I said that about your name."

"Well, I'm not trying to put anything over on you, skipper," said Landers-Blanchard bruskly. "I ain't that kind of a man, as you'll learn when you know me better."

"Oh, I know you're all right," said Carlson. "You might as well step into the boat, and lighten the stern—go to the for'ard thwart."

So Landers-Blanchard climbed into the boat, and in a few minutes the seamen came out of the coconut-grove, rolling the cask before them. It was loaded and, Carlson sitting in the stern-sheets, they were soon alongside the *Mariveles*.

The longboat's stern being backed up to the sea-ladder, the skipper was first aboard. He hurried aft to the main cabin, leaving Landers-Blanchard to climb slowly over the side. With a tap on the door of Shipman-Blanchard's cabin, he announced his return.

THE door opened and the skipper edged in.

"He's coming," whispered Carlson. "He said he didn't want to be known by the name of Blanchard, so I told him I'd call him Landers. Don't be surprized when I introduce him by that name—he's crooked all right."

Shipman-Blanchard stared at Carlson, and a smile broke over his face.

"It's just about as I thought," he replied in a whisper. "You can see for yourself that this chap is not playing a straight game. Well, we'll handle him smooth, and turn him over to the cutter people."

He pushed Carlson gently out through the door, in a pantomime that meant they must not be caught whispering by the newcomer.

Carlson disappeared into the passage leading to the fore-deck, and presently the man concealed in the sleeping-cabin heard the skipper's voice saying cheerily—

"Come along aft, Mr. Landers."

Shipman-Blanchard closed his door softly and fastened it with the inside hook. Then he put an eye to one of the little ventilating holes, which gave him a view of the main

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cabin that took in the forward side of the cabin table—which was where the newcomer was to sit.

Carlson led the way into the main cabin, followed by the new passenger. But the skipper did not realize that there was any significance in the fact that Landers-Blanchard, as he entered, kept his right hand under the lapel of his coat on the left side, fingering softly the loop of dangling watch-chain.

"You got a comfortable little schooner, cap'n," he remarked, as his eyes roved over the main cabin, taking in every detail, and making careful note of the location of the doors of the sleeping-cabins on each side.

Carlson agreed that there was comfort enough, except for the heat, and taking a key from his pocket, opened the door of a room which was directly opposite that occupied by his first passenger.

"You might put your gear away," remarked the skipper, as he pointed to the narrow bunk built against the bulkhead. "We'll have a nip of something, and I'll see about getting out."

Landers-Blanchard tossed his bundle carelessly into the high bunk and shut the door. Already Carlson had drawn a folding stool from under the forward end of the table, and placed it at the after end. So his new passenger sat down facing the companionway which led up to the quarter-deck.

"I'll want to be out in the air, I'll tell you that," commented the newcomer, as he ran a handkerchief over his face. "It's hot enough in here to fry an eel."

"We'll be out of the bay in a jiffy, and have more breeze," said Carlson, as he rapped on the bulkhead.

A Chinese cook appeared in the galley passage, and the skipper gave an order for stone-ginger and gin. Then he stepped into the passage and called forward to have the headsails set, and cast the schooner's bows for the open sea before getting up the anchor.

Immediately there were sounds of activity on deck, but Carlson returned to his guest just as a bottle and a jar, with glasses, were placed on the table.

The new passenger could see brown bare legs in the glaring light at the head of the companion, and orders were called in a native tongue. Wheel-chains rattled behind the after bulkhead, and there was a creaking of halyards from forward.

"What's become of your passenger?" asked Landers-Blanchard, as the skipper poured the glasses full.

Carlson ducked his head in the direction of Shipman-Blanchard's room. "In there—feeling pretty dumpish. Anyhow, he's been under the weather, and wants to sleep. The new water'll put him on his feet."

"Maybe he'd like a drink."

Carlson turned and looked at the door of the cabin which was occupied.

"Maybe he would," he agreed, and getting up, put an ear against the door and listened. "Yes, he's asleep," he said in a low tone, and returned to the table and seated himself again.

The new passenger still fingered the loop of watch-chain.

They drank with an exchange of appropriate compliments. The vessel heeled gently, and they were conscious of a turning movement.

"We might as well go on deck," said the skipper. But at that moment, the door of Shipman-Blanchard's room opened slowly, and his head came out from behind the casing. He stared at the stranger at the table, who looked straight at him.

"I been asleep," said the man in the cabin. "I felt the motion—we must be going—sorry to butt in——"

"Oh, that's all right," said Carlson. "Come on out and have a tot—we've got a new passenger for Manila," and he introduced the men by repeating their names.

But Shipman-Blanchard did not come out of his cabin. He kept his left hand on the ring-knob of the door, and twisted his head in a sidewise nod. They held each other's eyes for a minute, but the right hand of the newcomer was out of sight now under the front of his coat. Neither gave any sign of recognition.

The man in the cabin disappeared, and then came out. He was wearing a white coat over an undershirt, and his right hand appeared to be adjusting a belt in the back. He wore a broad grin now.

"It'll be pleasant to have company to Manila," he remarked cordially as he approached the table. "Not but what Carlson's a good scout, but you know skippers can't waste all their time with passengers."

"We might have a game of cards when we

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get out where there's a breath of air," said the man at the table.

"I'll have to be getting out on deck," said Carlson to Shipman-Blanchard, "that is—if everything's—all right."

"Everything's fine, skipper," was the reply. "You go ahead," he urged with bluff good fellowship. "Landers and me—we'll have a nip on our own just to start things off."

They grinned at each other with an amiability that savored of a meeting between old friends, and in spite of the heat in the main-cabin, remained there, as if they understood that there existed between them a desire to talk without having Carlson overhear them.

Shipman-Blanchard poured just enough ginger-beer to carry out the formality of a drink, and sat down opposite the stranger, paying no attention to the departure of the skipper, but keeping his eyes on the new passenger, even while they drank in silence.

"I've never been in at Onatu Island before," remarked Shipman-Blanchard, as he wiped his lips with the back of his left hand. His right was on a hip, under his coat. "Looks like an island that ought to be valuable."

"Good enough place, yes," said Landers-Blanchard. "From what I've seen of it, I'd say it has a good future."

"There's a plantation on the other side, isn't there?" asked Shipman-Blanchard.

"Yes, in hemp, mostly," said Landers-Blanchard.

He held his tumbler in his left hand, well away from him, at just the proper distance so that as he gazed dreamily at it, the angle of his vision covered the edge of the table on Shipman-Blanchard's side. As he turned the glass in his fingers, he was really watching the other's right arm.

"What's the name of the planter there?" asked Shipman-Blanchard. "I've heard it—Ganchard—something like that."

"Blanchard," said the man who had just come aboard.

"Friend of yours?"

"No. I came down to see him, but learned he was away on a trip to some other island. Couldn't wait—so I came over this side in hope of picking up a schooner—and was lucky."

"Oh, then you've just come from the plantation?"

"Yes. I'm an agent for hemp-stripping machinery—a new invention that's going to make things hum for the planters here, if they've got sense enough to put it in. But you know how it is with a new thing—planters always argue that labor is cheap, and untried machinery is a gamble. But this Blanchard's a wise sort of chap, and I'll get him next trip down."

Shipman-Blanchard rose.

"I wish you luck with him," he said. "I suppose we might as well go on deck for a mouthful of air."

"I'll be up right away," said Landers-Blanchard, but did not stir from his seat. "I've got to get into my kit for some things I need."

Shipman-Blanchard backed away in the direction of his own cabin, and putting his left hand on the ring-knob, paused as he said——

"I've got to get a supply of cigars from my grip."

He seemed to mistrust the other—there was something about that hand which kept hidden beyond the watch-chain, which disquieted him.

"You're from Java, aren't you?" asked the newcomer.

"In a way I am. I've talked Java to the skipper, and that's where I've left my family for this trip to Manila. But I'm really from Sumatra—in rubber."

"Oh," said Landers-Blanchard. "Sumatra—and in rubber."

"Yes," said the other, and pulled his door open.

He entered sidewise, so that he did not have to turn his back to the man at the table, and disappeared.

In that instant, Landers-Blanchard was out of his seat, and with a quick, cat-like, silent movement, slipped into the passage to the fore-deck. He made his way aft at once, along the runway on the starboard side of the main cabin. By this means he gained the quarter-deck without the chance of leading the way up the companion ahead of the first passenger. That would have required that Landers-Blanchard turn his back on the man from Sumatra, unless the latter had shown a willingness to go ahead when they went on deck together. But Landers-Blanchard well knew that his Sumatra friend had no intention of turning his back to the newcomer; it was plain enough that the first passenger had a special regard for his own back.

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CARLSON was leaning on his elbows against the roof of the cabin-trunk, eyes fixed on the bows, while the schooner slowly glided seaward, laid over under a gentle beam breeze. The native helmsman kept his eyes on the swelling foresail, and the crew loafed against the bulwarks, waiting to carry out any order to trim sails. The native mate stood by the main-mast.

Carlson nodded to his own passenger, and a moment later slipped down the companionway. He found his first passenger in the door of his cabin, his head out, watching in the direction of the passage to the fore-deck. When he heard the skipper come down, he beckoned silently. Carlson went in with him, and they closed the door.

"What do you think of him now?" asked Carlson in a cautious whisper, and jerked his head in the direction of the companion, to indicate that the new passenger was on deck, aft.

"I know who he is now, and I'm sure of what he's after."

"Oh, you know him!"

"No, never saw him before. But I knew he was coming to my island. That's why I went over to Weygant Island, where you picked me up to bring me back home."

"But what's he after?" asked the skipper.

"Came to kill me, and found me gone."

"Kill you! What for?"

"I'll tell you all about it now. I blundered into some information on Weygant Island a while back—dangerous secret. It was a gang—and this gang has sent this chap to finish me—because they know I'll tip off the Manila police and the coast-guard. He got over to my plantation while I was away—probably dropped off a schooner in the night—rowed ashore by the skipper. But he didn't let any of my natives see him, probably—he just hung around and discovered I was away, and got to this side of the island during the night. Having missed me, he wanted to get away and have another try at it, so he passed himself off to you as being me."

"Well, we'll hand him over to the coast-guard," said Carlson.

"You see," went on the other, "this gang of murderers is on my trail because I discovered one of their crimes. He's one of the gang."

"But are you sure he hasn't recognized you? Won't he take a shot?"

"He's suspicious of me, but not sure. You see, I used to wear a beard, but I've shaved it off, luckily. So he doesn't want to make a false move until he's certain. But I'll finish the business when we come alongside the cutter at Weygant. I'll slip aboard the cutter and pass the word he's with you."

"Can't I get him into a room and lock him up?" asked Carlson.

"That's just what I had in mind," said the other. "We'll watch our chance, and when he steps into a room, we'll clamp him, and hold him for the cutter. If he doesn't go into his room, we've got to trap him in some way. Take your time about it, but don't stay here any longer, or he'll suspect we're in together to grab him—that we know who he is."

Carlson nodded understandingly and opened the door. Shipman-Blanchard followed him out, and a gasp of warning came from the skipper, for his eyes caught a figure in the corner of the after bulkhead. It was the new passenger, crouched forward, in an attitude of listening, an automatic pistol was in each hand, held at the ready.

Shipman-Blanchard threw his body sidewise as Carlson leaped across the cabin to get out of the line of fire, for he saw the man who had come out of the cabin with him throw up a hand that held a revolver.

There was a double report from the man in the corner—two sharp jets of flame—and the main cabin was flushed with powder smoke and gas.

Shipman-Blanchard crashed back against the bulkhead, his revolver hand went upward with a spasmodic jerk, the weapon was discharged into the tiny skylight, and bits of glass tinkled down on the table and deck. Shipman-Blanchard bent forward slowly, and pitched head first under the cabin table, where he lay still.

"What did you do that for?" asked Carlson's steady voice through the smoke which was now swirling upward through the companion and the broken skylight.

"Where did you pick that man up?" demanded the man with the automatics. His voice was cold, and he kept his weapons ready.

"At Weygant Island," said Carlson, without hesitation.

"Oh, at Weygant, eh? I thought he was from Java."

"That's what he told me to tell you," said the skipper.

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Both disregarded the fact that the cook, the native mate, and a brown seaman were crowded into the end of the passage, staring into the main cabin, while the helmsman had deserted the wheel and was peering down through the companionway.

"How much are you in cahoots with him, is what I want to know. You'd better tell the truth, or I'll drill *you*. I don't want to shoot any more, but I can if I have to. But talk straight, skipper."

"I ain't in cahoots with him at all," said the skipper. "He told me his name was Blanchard——"

"Oh, he did, eh. That settles it—you're straight, I can see that," and he slipped his automatics into the holsters under his arm-pits.

Carlson leaped upon him and pinioned his arms, calling to the mate for help.

But the prisoner made no resistance, and allowed himself to be borne to the table by both men.

"Go easy," he urged. "I'm not going to make any fight, because I know you're straight. But let me tell you something, before you pull anything, and——"

"What've you got to say?" demanded Carlson. "You kill a passenger, and I can't stand for that."

But Carlson, finding that the slayer was cool and not at all concerned about being captured, turned him loose, and he sat down on a stool, his back to the table.

"You heard of a murder on Weygant—this chap was telling you about it in the cabin. All right. I happen to know who pulled off that murder. This chap was one of the gang—and was coming over to kill me. He slipped through the coast-guard, I presume, by passing himself off on you as me—and I'm Blanchard.

"I knew he was coming to get me, but I wasn't running away from him. I got to my plantation from Weygant, but didn't let my natives know I'd come. I hid in one of my own warehouses, put on an old suit of clothes to come through the mud in the swamp. I figured whoever was after me would land on this side, so I slept two nights up on the cliff under a shelter. I thought there was more behind your coming in than mere fresh water, and when you said you had a passenger, I knew it was this chap. But you threw me off a little by the way you acted when I sounded you, and you didn't tell the truth. However, it's all in the day's work, and we'll run over to Weygant and make our report to the cutter. Here's a police circular on this bird—he's known as the Swatow Gent—head of a gang of crooks."

Blanchard tossed a printed slip to Carlson. On it was a picture of the man lying dead under the table, with his description.

Carlson examined the circular, while his native mate looked over his shoulder.

"Why, sure, that's him!" exclaimed the amazed skipper. "And to think he took me in the way he did! Now I know why he wanted to wait until dark to go ashore, and cross the island on foot, instead o' letting me take him around the island to the plantation side. He was out to get you! He certainly was a slick guy!"

"Pretty slick," agreed Blanchard, "but not slick enough."

EARLY COMMERCIAL MONOPOLY IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

by Leon Rowland

EXCLUSIVE commercial privileges with, especially, a monopoly of the right to buy and sell furs, for all or part of the States of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming, with some other slight pieces of contiguous territory, were granted to a single corporation two hundred and five years ago.

The grantor was Louis XIV, king of France. The grantee was the Western Company, which was also known as the Mississippi Company. The territory designated for this immense trade monopoly was the Province of Louisiana. Among the other authorities which the grant gave to Anthony Crozat, the head of the Western Company, was that of trafficking in the products of "all cultivated lands" in the valley of the Mississippi, and of bringing a ship-load of negroes from Africa once a year.

Crozat, even with this monopoly of traffic and commerce, was not satisfied and surrendered his grant back to the French crown fifteen years later.

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Gamblers' Qualifications

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

by Barry Scobee

Author of "The Derelict Ranch," "Sky, Land and Men," etc.

JACK MONFORT came a-riding in from the ranches swearing that he had roped his last cow and branded his last calf—telling the world that he had done the last and final lick o' work he ever meant to do this side of the Great Divide.

Smith the druggist, standing on his porch, looked instead of spoke his question.

"Gambling," answered Jack as he slid down from his bay horse and dropped the reins. "From now on I live by gambling."

There was a hard look in the youth's eyes. He strode through the cool doors of the drug-store demanding something fizzy to get the dust out of his teeth.

Smith the druggist set out a purple drink in a tall glass from the fountain, accepted the dime and offered his customer one straw with his fingers. Jack ignored the straw and took a mouthful from the glass. He rinsed his mouth audibly and spat cracked ice and purple fluid through the door to the porch. A dark blotch appeared instantly on the cement, and Jack enlarged this by slinging out what was left in the glass.

"Psho'," mildly protested Smith the druggist. "You've wasted your drink."

Jack set the glass down on the marble counter so decisively that it cracked in twain from top to bottom.

"I should worry about expenses," he said.

"You act like you been fired," surmised Smith shrewdly and not unsympathetically.

"Higher'n a cat's back!"

" 'Dug' Scollop on the war-path?"

"A susual. A-giggling and a-sputterin' and spittin' tobacco juice, and a-cussin' and a-actin' like he was—— or a city policeman."

"Kennard calls him the human Juggernaut."

"He sure run over me," declared Jack.

Again Smith looked instead of spoke the questions that flooded his mind.

Jack sat down on one of the little metal high-chairs that perked themselves in a ragged row along the fountain counter and fanned himself impatiently a moment with his big peaked Stetson. And then abruptly he turned loose the flood gates of his complaint:

"Old Dug Scollop fired me because I set down a minnit after a tussle with a cow we was trying to get through a gate. Said I couldn't do a man's work any more. Said he didn't want any half-time man around. Said he didn't want me around any more. Said I was mo' cut out to play the piano in town. He said I *couldn't do a man's work any more!*"

As a chalky whiteness of flesh underlay Jack's surface tan, so a vast significance underlay his emphatic plaint of injustice. And Smith the druggist understood.

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"I wouldn't pay any attention to *that* if I was you," he tried to console.

"He stood there in the corral gate with his thumbs in his belt," Jack plunged along bitterly, "and when I tried to say something he bellowed like a Hereford bull. 'Don't give me words! Git out—git out—git out—git out!' And he shooed me with his hands like a woman shoos chicks off the garden."

"The county would about give you a medal if you had shot him," said Smith, his mouth awry with disgust. "Only thing that has saved him many a time is his old age."

But Smith was not altogether right about this. Some people respected Scollop for his wealth and ability and power; others were afraid of him. Those things helped to save the cowman too.

"He's ruined me, plumb ruined me," said Jack.

"Oh, I reckon not that," replied Smith.

"You bet that! 'You can't do a man's work,' says he, and fired me. I'm the first white cow-hand to be fired in this county in the six years I've been here. Why I ever went to work for the old hamstringer two weeks ago is more than I know. He sure put the Indian sign on me. Ain't a person in the Southwest but will know what ails me."

"You need a rest," was all the druggist could think to say.

"Rest!" Jack laughed nastily, without mirth. "That's what the doctors said two months ago. It's what I was doing when Scollop fired me. Ha-ha-ha! Rest!"

The youth turned on Smith fiercely.

"Smith, I'm going to *take* rest. *Take* it, hear me? You know how? Gambling. I thought it all out riding in this forenoon. You make money playing poker. Kennard makes money. So do others playing up there in the Den. And Scollop makes more than any of you. Didn't he win ten thousand plunks in one game? I'm going to get in on that easy money. And I'm *going to get even with Scollop!* Him a-standin' there a-shooing me off the place like a chick. A-Juggernauting me. I thought it all out coming in this morning."

"You and Scollop never did get along, did ye?"

"All same cat and dog. He jumped me first time he ever laid eyes on me. Six years ago this Summer I rode down from the Staked Plains looking for a job, and I stopped in here at your place to get a cool drink and to rest my hams from the saddle. I went to thumping on the piano there by the wall and he called me the 'Piano Kid.' He was sitting in one chair and had his feet in another, smoking a fat cigar, and he says, 'Piano Kid, bah!' and blew smoke out at me."

"How old was you?"

"Sixteen. Listen, Smith. I'm going to get even—say, is Old Scollop a game sport? Is he a quitter? Will he bet the limit in the poker games?"

"He'd bet his eyes."

"Listen, will he bet his last dollar and his last steer and his last horse and section of land? Will he go the *limit?*"

Smith the druggist laughed as if at the utter foolishness of questioning that Scollop would go the limit.

"Then some day," Jack flung out, "I'll take his last dollar and his last steer and his last section of land. I'd been thinking for a week about turning to gambling to make an easy living and get rest. When I thought about getting revenge on him at the same time, why, I knew nothing could hold me. Smith, I'm a sick man but, by ——, I'll recuperate in ease on that man's money! You hear me?"

Jack was panting. The whiteness under his tan showed blanched. He shook with emotion.

"You'd better not let that kind o' talk get out," Smith advised.

"Let it get out!" Jack half screamed, wild and reckless now. "You can go tell the world what I brag about. I want you to. I want old Dug Scollop to hear it, want to taunt him up to the sticking point so's he won't turn quitter."

Inflamed by his half-madness, his sickness-fear and his boast, Jack leaped up in silly bravado and jerking off his hat whirled it about his head and sent it sailing across the store toward shelves and bottles.

"Whoopee!" he yelled.

It caught a slender, fancy bottle on a high glass case and sent it smashing to the floor.

Said Smith the druggist mildly—

"I won't charge you anything for the glass you broke but it'll cost you seven dollars for that bottle."

"I should worry! I got a hundred dollars saved up, and a horse and saddle. And I'm a gamboleer now. Whoopee!"

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He flung himself to the piano against the wall and began to play.

Jack Monfort's playing expressed his emotion, his thought. Now it was crude and wild and told of his wrath and madness and fear. He played so crazily that Smith went out on the porch and shut the door after him to get away from the harrowingness of it.

Gradually the madness faded, and the playing drifted through a steady let-down—despair, unrest, sadness, and finally attained a low calmness, the calmness of assurance and steady purpose. Presently Jack came out to the bank of easy chairs on the porch, empty now at noontime, and sat down beside the druggist.

"I'm sorry I broke the perfumery bottle," said he. "I'll pay for it. I got to be calm from now on. I'll be in your poker game tonight."

Smith looked a mild query, but Jack made no answer. He had said his say. He had become a man.

A LITTLE room in the rear of the Ranch Trading Company's store had been the precinct of the Goddess of Chance in Poker for years. It was called sometimes the "Den" and sometimes "Monte Cardo."

When a man was elected sheriff or appointed a deputy his memory of the Den and of gambling became a blank. Old Dug Scollop, who was a power in local politics, and other gamblers saw that men gifted in this direction were elected.

The Den was reached by a flight of steps sticking to the side of the stone store-building like a ship's ladder. Though it was surmised that a billion dollars, counting every shift of coin and chip, had changed hands in this badly heated and ventilated room, yet never had a man been knifed or killed over the gambling, nor had there been more than a momentary dispute in the way of trouble through all the years.

This clean record was because the players were honest. Scalawags were not permitted to enter. It was a social game played by men able to afford losing. In the seasons of cattle selling a great deal of money was put into play. Five-thousand-dollar games were not unheard of, and once Dug Scollop walloped a buyer for ten thousand.

On the other hand, the playing took on a professional air because from all over the country, from traveling salesmen and the like, came a steady driblet of money into the hands of the "regulars" who played there—Smith and Kennard and two or three others. Jack Monfort, claiming professionalism, would not be barred.

Dug Scollop was the grizzliest old timer and the richest man to play in the games. He and his old wife were characters. He liked to pretend that he was much more of an ol'-timer than he was. Many years before he had shot and wounded a man over a section of land. That and his habit of talking about the old time bad men he had associated with increased his arrogance. He had an old-fashioned revolver with three notches filed in the barrel. He always had this in the poker games and he proclaimed himself as quick on the draw. Men were afraid of that gun and Scollop was the sort to enjoy their fear.

Jack Monfort was intrinsically of the cow-country breed. The social and business ways of the land were his ways. Or were until the cough came and the doctors warned him. Then he grew white under his tan, and a haunted look gathered behind his eyes. He became afraid, would grow panicky in the small hours lying awake—lost strength, became different.

At the hour of complete darkness Jack ascended the steps on the side of the store building and determinedly entered the narrow hall and then the little room.

He stood blinking on the threshold, a tall slender youth, sober of face and hard, even thin-lipped; eyes cold, blond hair boyishly close-cropped.

Five men sat around the green-topped table. Smith the druggist was there. The searching, regardful looks of the men told Jack that Smith had talked. He knew that his boast to do for Scollop had set him still farther apart. Scollop was not present, which fact Jack had known.

"See you got here," said Smith. "Come in and have a chair."

"What does it take to set in?" asked Jack.

"A bone-head and lots of money," came a facetious response.

"Ten dollars," answered Kennard the garage man.

He always kept the chips and the money. Now he opened a cigar box, displaying the white, red and blue counters and some paper money and silver. Jack laid down a ten-dollar bill and received some carefully counted chips.

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"See you got a place to live," commented Kennard sociably when the transaction was complete.

Every eye turned on Jack. He had expected as much, for he had moved in the course of the day into a little shack with a sinister reputation. It had been dubbed for years, with grimly humorous reference to its use, "Consumptives' Home." It sat among boulders upon the slope of the foothill above the cow-land village, and persons seeking to regain health in this high, dry altitude often "batched" there in the lonely exclusion of the tubercular. To move in was to confess oneself as at least touched by the great white sickness. But as with many others, Jack had no alternative except the bare ground. There was nowhere else to go within his means.

"Pleasant outlook up there," said one.

"Last two fellers that lived there," observed another, "got well."

The subject was changed. Nothing about what he had told Smith. But it must have been talked around a lot through the afternoon, Jack thought. Such a boast as his would go like fire.

Jack lost his ten dollars in a few deals. He had not played poker much. He perceived that he was no match for these shrewd players. They had knowledge and mannerisms of the game that were beyond him.

He bought a second ten dollars' worth of chips, and instead of plunging contented himself largely with putting in his ante and watching the playing of the others.

Kennard and Smith seemed to do the best playing. Jack knew they had reputations of winning more than most of the frequenters of the Den. As the pots were raked in Jack kept saying to himself:

"Easy money! There's a month's pay without ropin' a cow or gettin' throwed once by a mean bronc."

Jack was no such fool as to believe that a player always won and never lost. He concluded as he watched that in the long run a man like Smith would come out with a fair living at the end of a month.

In the midst of the playing Dug Scollop came in, gross, heavy, shrewd, arrogant. He was utterly oblivious to who was present, as if the presence or absence of other men affected him in not the slightest degree. Officers of his temperament are shot from behind in times of war. Scollop took a key on the end of a heavy watch-chain and unlocked the door of a stout, metal locker in one corner. In the act he haw-haw-hawed out in amused, contemptuous laughter.

"Heard a minnit ago," he roared, "that Jack Monfort's out to do me. Huh-huh-huh!"

He lifted a belt and scabbard and his old heavy six-shooter from the locker and buckled the armament on. He sat down heavily and fished through his vest pockets until his fingers found a twenty-dollar bill, which he flipped out to Kennard.

"Whew!" He blew out a deep breath between his thick lips. "Et a calf's liver and raw onions for supper and they was a little too heavy. I may be sort o' spunky tonight."

He picked up cards dealt to him. He had swept the circle in one swift look. He did not acknowledge the presence of Jack. A chuckle that seemed to develop deep in his great chest, and rise in a series of sputters and rattles, finally came out of his bass mouth in amused—something that had been called giggling, or tittering.

"So the Piano Kid's out for me, hey? Maybe I ought to warn the old woman that she'll soon be homeless."

He shook his head. The joke was too big to be laughed at even, especially by a man so filled with liver and raw onions.

Somehow this night the gun did not fit to his paunch. He took it out of the scabbard and laid it on the table.

"Seems like I can't play without it," he remarked. "Got used to it in the early days when men had to be quick on the draw."

Jack kept still, though every word and sputter gouged him. He was a little in awe of the man, armed and bulging with importance as the ranchman was. For that matter, so were the others, unless it was Smith. All addressed him respectfully as Mr. Scollop, except the druggist, who used simply, "Dug," which was the current "short"—spelling and all—for Douglas. Scollop himself so signed the name.

Jack watched his erstwhile boss's playing. For reasons that he could not discern it was impressed upon him that the man was the best poker player at the table. He won. And Jack kept thinking to himself, in his bitter-hopeful way:

"Easy money. Ease and rest. Health."

He tingled to draw in money like these gamblers. At the same time that he noted

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the ways and mannerisms of Scollop with a sort of admiration, he felt an itching hate for the man.

In due time Jack got into the game more actively. He won back his first ten dollars and a little more. Some unformed thought of warning, perhaps, caused Scollop to replace his gun in its scabbard.

The high stacks of chips, worth five cents, fifty cents and a dollar each, that accumulated before the wealthy ranchman tempted Jack. He could not keep his eyes from them. The grizzled old bear was too all-seeing in a card game not to note this interest.

Jack searched his cards eagerly each deal for the wherewithal to jimmy a half-month's wages out of Scollop's stacks. There came a hand then when he thought the attempt worth while. This was not particularly because of cards in his own hand, for he had only two pairs, aces and tens, but because of a little act that he saw the cowman commit.

He saw the big man pick up his cards and look at them close to his vest, as he always did, saw him put them away from him with a slight, almost microscopic gesture of disdain, as if the hand were utterly worthless. Jack thought:

"His hand is a blank. He's not trying to fool anybody or else he would have been more pronounced in his disgust. If I can egg him on this time I'll rake in a good pot."

Scollop sat back indifferently, gently patting his full stomach.

Jack bet two dollars and when the cowman's time came that individual looked at his cards dourly, as if tempted to throw them away.

"Don't you ever bet unless you're sure of winning?" sneered Jack.

Scollop, with the air of brushing away a bothersome fly, and without looking, picked up a thumb-and-finger full of blue chips and scooted them to the center of the table. At the same time he said, without much interest—

"Kennard, can you do an hour's work on my car in the morning?"

Kennard grunted and counted the chips the ranchman had thrown in.

"Jack," said he, "you're called and raised."

Jack counted and put in the rest of his chips. Scollop covered them.

"Cyards?" asked the dealer. "Chance to make a good hand out of a bad 'un."

"One," said Jack.

"Mr. Scollop?"

"Reckon," answered the cowman, "I won't need any."

A flicker of amusement went around the table. Instantly Jack knew that he had been fooled. He felt sold. He began to see red. Down went his cards with an angry slap.

"Two pairs," he said.

Scollop spread his hand for all to see. It was a full house. He tittered and grinned and his shoulders shook with inward laughter.

"Piano Kid," said he, "you seen my little flip o' disgust, didn't ye? He-he-he! An' you was going to do me!"

Jack could see only a thick bulk before him because of a red-like haze over his eyes. He breathed with difficulty, and murder was in his heart.

"Piano Kid," Scollop drawled on, "you take the advice of an ol'-timer like me and join the Women's Aid. Or get some dollies to play with 'stead o' poker chips."

Jack sprang up, leaned across the table as if about to slap the ranchman.

"What do you mean?" he flared.

"Mean you'll never make a poker player. It takes savvy to make a poker player, like anything else. Savvy and concentration and *work*, and them things ain't in you."

He reached out his hands like rakes and dragged the chips slowly to him, grinning and tittering and shaking with his overbearing mirth.

"Huh-huh-huh! Heard you was going to do for me!"

Jack could tolerate no more. He flamed. He swung the chair he had been sitting in high above his head. But before he could bring it down the cowman was on his feet, his own chair falling backward. As quickly, he had drawn his six-shooter—it flashed out so swiftly the eye could scarcely follow.

With the drop on him there was nothing for Jack to do but quit. He let the chair down, glaring at his tormentor. He stepped to the door, paused, set his back to the panels and a hand on the knob.

"Scollop," said he, grim and white, "some day, if you don't turn quitter and leave off playing, I'll break you! I'll take from you every dollar and every steer and horse and section of land you own! Unless you turn yellow and quit!"

Scollop gurgled with amusement as if he

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felt that this sick boy could never touch *him*.

But Jack stood there, looking coldly, unblinkingly, as merciless as stone, into the grinning face of the old cowman. And Scollop realized that he was up against something besides a boast. Slowly the grin faded and grimness, then wrath, came to the surface. All at once he was beating on the green table with the barrel of his heavy revolver.

"You faded-out, piano-playing squidget!" he roared. "The day you try that you'd better be quicker on the draw than old Dug Scollop!"

"I'll be quick!" retorted Jack, and passing out slammed the door behind him.

THE three following days Jack lay on the cot in his shack and thought and watched through the frame of his open door the road, and the scattered adobe village below with its infrequent apple and alamo trees twinkling emerald-green in the sunshine. It was the loneliness and isolation of the T. B. But Jack did not care. The necessity of making a living without hard labor was upon him and he was working out his plan.

The woman who owned the shack called on him, as she had on each new occupant, and offered a cup of cold water of healing in the name of human brotherhood.

"Be calm, calm, always calm," was what Jack's ears heard of her talk.

By sheer desire and compulsion of the human will he made calmness his. In those three days of castigation—for they were that—he made himself over.

Jack knew that he must not gamble and not win, or win merely haphazardly. He reviewed all the men he had ever known or read about, who were experts in something, in the light of what Scollop had said about concentration, and he saw that those who had accomplished expertness had done so by putting their all into the process.

He considered a man in the county who was an expert rifle-shot and billiard player. That man had spent hours a day for weeks studying, not merely passing time, in learning these things. Jack recalled hearing that Scollop once boasted that he had spent a solid year of thought and observation in learning to play poker.

"I'll beat that," thought Jack. "I can give myself for two years, or longer. I'll manage somehow to live."

Then there was another thing to consider—the threat of the big ranchman and his quickness on the draw. Jack included expert pistol work in his needed equipment to win a living and revenge with cards.

At the evening of the third day he had arrived at conclusions, and was thereby rested, was himself again with his plan shaped and clear. And being calm also he was no longer so much afraid of his sickness.

He got up, shaved, dressed in fresh woolen shirt and khaki trousers, saw a sterner face than heretofore in his scrap of mirror, and surveyed the world from his doorway, the first appearance of a grim new man.

Off beyond the back of Old Blue Mountain the sun was setting in the clear glory that is of the Southwest—instead of the unbelievably vast watery red sunset of the North Pacific coast, or the rapid ascents and descents of the tropics. On the road below his slope he saw Dug Scollop bowling along in his great roadster and for a moment he itched to have it out with the man then and there. But he put the thought aside. He could abide in patience. The thing was certain, ultimately.

In pursuance of his detailed plan, Jack went to the office of the hotel and hunted among the stacks of old papers and found a cheap monthly that advertised gamblers' equipment, such as mirror rings and waxes and marked cards. He found addresses and ordered a copy of Hoyle, a special volume on poker, and a pack of marked cards.

In due time these things came through the mail. He inspected the marked cards curiously, studied them from all angles and in many lights, then burned them. He had had no intention of using a marked deck, but he was missing no step in familiarizing himself with gambling methods. He meant to base his playing on mental keenness—knowledge of the game and of other men.

He set himself the task of six hours a day studying cards, watching hands, figuring probabilities such as the chance of filling a two-card flush being one to ninety-five. He acquired such knowledge and set it aside as practically useless.

He made a deck of cards the most familiar thing in his life. Six hours a day for thirty days before he even looked at another game. Then he began to watch for evenings when Dug Scollop was not in the little "Monte Cardo." He would buy into the game and

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watch the play, watching when to bet, watching faces, mannerisms, betting but seldom and then usually winning a trifle. In all this he had the patience of Job. He was cold, silent, neither hating nor loving, simply calm, studious.

Also Jack practised pistol work. He got a shoulder scabbard and wore a thirty-eight caliber automatic constantly, under his left arm beneath his coat. He practised the draw, holding the scabbard with his pressed-down elbow or left hand and drawing with the right hand, from all sorts of positions, on his face, on his back, standing, sitting, bending—worked at it for hours as a musician learning an instrument.

Sometimes he went to a lonely little cañon to practise shooting in connection with drawing. He practised alone, letting it be known that he did not wish company. Oddly enough, he found a surprizing liking and an unsuspected ability for marksmanship.

In his daily going about he never hurried, never went faster than a slow, calm walk, alert, watchful, withdrawn.

A strange development came from this aloofness and concentration. He lost contact with his fellow men. Young fellows getting up a little poker game now and then evaded him. Men went away from the Den when he entered. But Jack did not pin this to himself; the knowledge that this was true did not crystalize in his thought until it came like a slap in the face.

One night when he entered the Den no one was there. He waited an hour, coldly running over in his mind the characteristics of the men with whom he played, card-cataloging them mentally for use; not spiteful, not kindly, simply detached. He wondered why the others did not come, pondered upon his improving health, his increasing ability. Then Smith the druggist arrived.

"Wonder what's the matter with the pocket-books tonight?" Jack asked, without other greeting. "None of 'em showed up yet."

Smith sat down in silence and stared with hostile eye at his young protégé, and Jack maintained his calmness under the scrutiny, not turning a hair, until finally Smith asked—

"Don't you know why nobody's here?"

"No."

"Well, I'll tell you. It's been seven or eight months now since you broke the perfumery bottle and announced your intention of becoming a gambler—christened yourself so to speak."

"Yeah."

"You've made yourself over in that time. And, by heavens, Jack, you've done a nasty job of it."

"What!"

"Don't do any fancy drawing with that gun you keep nailed under your coat. But listen for your own good. I say you've made yourself over. You're a different man. You're twenty-three years old, but you look and act thirty. You never smile, never play the piano any more, never crack a joke."

Smith got up to the door, preparatory to leaving.

"You're hard and selfish. When I came into this room, did you greet me like you were glad to see me? You did not. You didn't give a hang whether I came or not. What you wanted, and asked about, was purses—money to win."

Smith drove on with rising color.

"You're an A-1 pistol shot. You're quick on the draw. You can handle a pack of cards smooth as a rascal, and read the wiles of your fellow players, but by the Lord Harry any man in this county would rather be a dud than to be you.

"You can't be that way and be a gambler. Men won't play with you. A gambler has got to have a heart, he's got to be friendly and generous. But you—you're a wolf. All you want is money. And they call you a wolf behind your back."

Smith stepped out and closed the door gently behind him. Jack felt as if he had been slapped with an open hand having the weight of truth and decency behind it. He sat far into the night pondering this sketch of himself.

WHEN Smith the druggist opened the store the next morning Jack entered and without a word began to play on the piano. What he played was at first rough, confused; but presently it became as sweet as the music of banked violins playing in the open breeze—like a low prairie wind singing through telegraph wires in the sun. It was the music of apology.

"Smith," said he, when he was ready to talk, "I've been hearing about the mining

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towns in Arizona being good gambling places."

"Yeah?"

"I owe you two hundred dollars I've had to borrow to keep going. If you'll lend me a hundred more I'll go to Arizona for six months, and I'll send you the money from there, or pay you in person when I come back."

"What's the big idee?"

"Change of scenery," answered Jack significantly.

"Umm—it might help ye."

Smith opened a big wallet and counted out some money, and got more from his cash register.

"There," said he. "You're honest anyhow, Jack. Don't let the three hundred worry you."

"My note——"

"Don't want it."

"—is that I swore I was going to break Dug Scollop. So I'll be back. Don't ever doubt that. That big hog doesn't escape! Get me? Well, much obliged. Six months."

WITH the same cold determination with which Jack Monfort had learned poker playing and the use of the pistol, he now turned to the learning of friendliness toward his fellow men. He greeted them with a boisterous "Hello," and a slap on the back and called them, "Ol' Top," and "Ol'-Timer," and, "Sport."

But Jack did not get along particularly. He saw that he was not liked. He had known only cowmen and small-town men in the cow-country heretofore. The cosmopolitan men in the mining towns—well, if they were not different Jack felt that they were. At least he blamed his poor progress on them.

Jack went broke. He was forced out of his boarding place. He had to go to three different acquaintances to get together five dollars of borrowed money, and they loaned grudgingly. With this money in his pocket he refrained even from eating a meal but bought into a poker game with it.

In this game was an old-time gambler who had come to town looking as if he were cut out of the Bret Harte stories. He wore a long coat, a velvet waistcoat, big soft hat and long hair—an old man as gentle as a mother. It was whispered that he was the last of the Mohicans—the last of the breed of the very ancient days of the West.

Jack won from the first. Chips accumulated in front of him in a way to make the others envious. He broke two of the players, and when they got up and stalked out he did not even offer them the price of a supper. He was too recently in from the street himself, with an empty stomach growling, his cough back upon him hackingly, and a frosty park the only prospect for a night's lodging, to be generous.

The third man to quit the game broke was a fellow on a spree. He started off and turned back wheedlingly:

"Ah, Buster, give me the price of a pint o' mescal anyhow. Loosen up. Don't be so tight."

"No!" barked Jack.

The old gambler looked hard at Jack—and in twenty minutes he had Jack broke flat. How he did it no one there could have just said, except that he operated without mercy.

Jack sneaked out, but before he got clear away he heard the voice of the old man behind him and felt a friendly hand on his shoulder.

"A word or two with you, son," said he. "Do you know what's wrong with you?"

"No."

"You're a fake, a hypocrite. You're a promising looking fellow but you're a coyote at heart. I've been watching you for a week. Maybe your sickness has made you that way. I don't know, son. Aren't any of us more than we ought to be, though.

"Son, the first thing in being a gambler, as I've found it out, is to know the game, then be quick on the draw, and then love your fellow men—and the greatest of these is the last."

"But I do love my fellow men," protested Jack.

"Yes, professionally. Don't argue, but come to my lodgings. No, first we'll have supper. You're half-starved. Then you'll rest a few days in my lodgings. I've a spare cot. I don't want anything out of you—no gambling partnership, no spy, no capper. I want just to show you that you've got to love your fellow men, and not fake as you have been doing."

MORE than twice six months went by and Jack Monfort was not back in Texas. The hustle and money and good fellows of the Arizona, Nevada and California mining places held him.

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The big pool hall had its usual mid-afternoon crowd. Jack, wearing his accustomed gray woolen shirt, gray suit, and soft hat, was starting the day off with a game of friendly billiards. A crowd of onlookers was around the table where he played. They were keen to talk with Jack, to hand him the chalk, or do any other service for a word from him—as men are with big league baseball players and ring fighters and prominent gamblers. Jack had an unassuming way that drew people to him.

A youth coming in from the street walked hurriedly up to Jack, a bit breathless.

"Hey, Mister Jack," he whispered hoarsely, "they's a guy from the mountains headin' this way. Says he's going to get the first professional gambler he sees. You'd——"

The messenger of bad news stopped. He couldn't tell a man to go and hide. He had a brilliant idea.

"Let's go to a movie, Mister Jack," he suggested.

Jack laughed.

"Thanks," said he, "but I reckon there's no use running from anybody that's hunting me."

"Ain't huntin' you. He's jist spifflicated."

In substantiation of the friendly messenger, the swinging doors were thrown wildly open and a huge "spifflicated" figure plunged in.

"Whoopee!" he yelled. "I'm a wild and wooly mountain lion from the Sierras, bred by a cyclone and raised on blastin' powder. Whoopee!"

He came plunging down an aisle between tables, the players all standing back to make room for him. The crowd was breathlessly still with the entertainment. About midway the mountain lion stopped and pointed a wicked finger toward Jack.

"I'm goin' to git me a tin horn gambler," he bellowed. " 'S'what I come to town fur. An' you're one of 'em!"

Quick as a flash the man snatched up a pool ball from a table and drew back to throw. But more quickly Jack drew his gun and fired.

Jack fired at the instant when the man's arm was at full reach back, just before it started on the forward sling. At the impact of the bullet, the pool ball seemed to explode. Pieces flew in all directions.

The wild and wooly jerked his hand down and shook it briskly, as if he had unexpectedly stuck it against a hot stove. A queer look passed over his face.

"Uh!" he grunted.

"Ut was the thirteen ball too," said a voice.

The man took his stinging fingers in his left hand and fled for the door shouting:

"Gangway! Gangway!"

A man who had been playing at a near-by table came over to Jack and handed him a business card.

"Pardon me," said he, "but I'm demonstrator with the biggest, or at least the best, arms company in America. If you ever want a job go to them and present that card. They want men who can shoot like that."

"I—I—" stammered Jack, embarrassed by the incident and by this praise.

"No apologies," laughed the other man. "You've got the goods."

Just as the mountain lion plunged through the swinging doors Jack had caught out of the tail of his eye two other men entering at a side door. These two now came up—the mayor, whose name was Smith, and Smith the druggist.

"Mr. Jack," said the mayor, "excuse me, but I want you to meet my brother Harl from Texas, visiting here."

Smith the druggist and Jack shook hands warmly, and made it clear to all concerned that they were old friends.

"You got the three hundred all O. K?" asked Jack.

"Sure. Long ago. Told you ye didn't need to pay interest."

"Oh, well——"

Jack waved the subject away.

Presently the mayor led them outside, and in due time Smith the druggist and Jack were alone at the edge of a little park. Smith regarded Jack curiously.

"You've made yourself over again," he said. "Looks like you've done a better job this time."

Jack made light of this:

"Oh, had to do something to make people like me or quit gambling. It's one of the gambler's qualifications."

"It goes deeper than that, Jack. Y'ever coming back to Texas?"

"Sure. I like Texas. When I get a little more money, when I get twenty thousand. I've got ten thousand banked now."

"And get old Dug Scollop—ye still got that bee?" asked Smith.

"Oh, I'd sort of forgot that."

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"You mean it? You going to let him go on getting away with that crude line o' his? Can't any of us do him up."

"I'd kind of forgot it," insisted Jack.

"Maybe that's the best way," conceded the druggist. "I'd be the last to egg you on."

After a visit of twenty minutes they separated, but Jack had not gone a dozen steps when he turned back and overtook the visitor.

"Say," said he, "you might let it get to Scollop's ears that I'm quicker on the draw than he is. I am, and I don't brag when I say so."

"What's the big idee?"

"Want to warn him. I know in my heart I could beat him to it if there was trouble. If I didn't warn him it would be like sneaking up behind a man and shooting him in the back."

"Jack," said Smith, "you're more than honest."

WEEKS later Jack arrived home on the mail stage from the distant railway and walked into the store of Smith, the druggist. About him was that inexplicable air of the gambler—the controlled, unreadable, yet pleasant face, the soft clothes, long hands, a remarkable calmness.

"Jack! Glad to see you home," said Smith, shaking hands warmly.

Others came forward, looked into Jack's face a moment, and gripped hands in a new, warm way at what they saw. All at once everybody seemed to be friendly, to go out of their way to accost him and be cheery.

Jack rented the little shack again above the town and the curving, gray road. Not that he was longer sick. He told people that his calmness had healed him. But because the place gave a feeling of home to him he desired it. He bought a piano and moved it in, and children—and adults too—were soon gathering about his door of evenings to listen to his playing.

But more swiftly than spread the county's friendliness for him there spread a story that he was back to do old Dug Scollop.

Scollop heard this tale. It was his nature to ride to the source, as if nothing on earth could hurt him, to find out if it were true, and to defy and taunt.

One evening from his doorway Jack saw his old enemy stop his swift roadster down at the foot of the slope and get out, and buckle around him a belt and gun, and start up the hill.

At sight of the brazen arrogance Jack's old wrath flared up. He wondered what best to do. He did not want trouble. To quiet himself, he went in and began to play on the piano a piece that had quieted his heart in other times of stress.

Scollop's bulk presently filled the doorway.

"Hi, there!" he blaated. "Heard you'd come back to do me."

Jack did not check his playing.

"Hi, there!" bellowed the bulk.

Jack never faltered nor looked around. The cowman stood spread across the door, hands against the jambs, one foot on the threshold, uncertain perhaps for the first time in his prosperous life just what to do.

Then Jack finished and faced the visitor.

"Know what I was playing?" he asked.

"Huh, what do I know about such stuff?"

"I was playing a piece called 'Souvenir,'" Jack said.

"Meanin' you'll be a souvenir of a misspent life purty soon, hey?"

"To me," Jack went on courteously, "the piece is 'Friendship.' It reminds me of the finest friendship I ever had—with an old gambler in Arizona. He was always whistling 'Souvenir.' He was a man, fair and square and quick on the draw."

As if what any other person could say amounted to nothing, Scollop brushed all this aside with his rumbling challenge:

"Heard you came back to do for me. How about it?"

At this disregard for others, at this headlong, overbearing arrogance, Jack's good intentions let go their hold.

"Yes," he said, "I've come back to do you."

The cowman's face turned hotly red.

"Say, kid, let me tell ye something. You'd better grow hair on your chest, and get some stout cuss words, and rosin up your nerves before you start in on old Dug."

"This old-time gambler friend of mine," went on Jack, "used to say there were three qualifications for a gambler. First, know the game. Second, be quickest on the draw. And third, love your fellow men. I've accomplished the first and second, and I thought I had a little of the third. I wanted to have. But I guess I was wrong, for I'm going to do for you."

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Scollop heard only one part of this, and he roared out—

"Quicker on the draw than me!"

He whipped out his six-shooter. He did it with a flourish, pridefully, like a boy showing his speed.

"How's that?" he demanded.

"Slow as a freight train," retorted Jack.

For a moment Jack was close to being shot down. The gun teetered and waggled and Scollop panted. But the man's sense won and he poked the gun back into its scabbard.

"I'm going to break you," Jack informed matter-of-factly, "unless you turn quitter and leave off playing."

"Come to the Den tonight," yelled Scollop. "I'll be there with more money than you ever smelt before in your born days."

He went lumbering off down the slope, a gross, ignorant old man. All at once Jack felt sorry for him.

Many communities have seen a man come into money, hundreds or thousands of dollars, and have seen him, "let the gamblers get it all." Such men do not bet all their wealth in one spectacular swoop and quit. They lose a little and gain some back and lose again, and draw out their money driblets, helpless to quit. And the first thing they know they have nothing left.

It was in just this manner that Jack began to take Scollop's money. They did not play every night. There was no hurry. Nothing spectacular was performed. But at the end of six weeks the youth had twenty thousand dollars of the old man's hard-earned wealth.

The twenty thousand was only the ranchman's cash in bank. He was not so much materially injured as he was mentally disrupted. He was "sore as a boil," as people said. The county laughed at him. It would have known nothing about the matter, however, or at least only rumors, had Scollop not blustered around like a Texas norther, for Jack never talked out of school.

Scollop was angry enough now to start in to get even, which was to get his money back. To obtain money to play with he was compeled to call in a loan. Then another, and another. Next he cashed a few Liberty bonds, and cashed in two other investments. All one by one, reluctantly, yet with a steadily rising wrath.

Not many men ever witnessed the games. None of the regulars in the game was eager to be identified with such notorious gambling. They kept a close tongue. Jack abhorred playing before a crowd of onlookers. Letting them see him take the old man's money was too much like grandstanding. He would not go in some nights when he saw a crowd gathering for a Roman holiday.

Jack kept himself in trim by riding, walking, reading, practising his pistol shooting. He could draw his automatic from its stiff, greased scabbard with a quickness that almost defied the eye. He did it not tensely but with muscles that flowed as smoothly as the paw of a playing cat-animal.

The whole county enjoyed the fun. As is always the case, facts were magnified and distorted. Always the sympathy was against the cowman. He had over-ridden the sensibilities of too many people to have a host of warm friends.

Then the cowman made a trip to El Paso. The rumor was that he laid a mortgage on all his live-stock, including the horses. Jack did not depend on rumor. He kept tab on his opponent. And he knew that the story of the mortgage was true. He was aware a little later that Scollop raised a few thousand dollars more, from two old neighbors, on a second mortgage on the cow stuff and horses.

It was not until Scollop had done this that fear began to ride him. Jack, watching the man, reading his inwardness in this great unrelenting contest, saw arrogance give way to fear, saw the fear grow game by game, there in the smoky Den.

Scollop was playing now not to show Jack a thing or two and thereby convince the county what a great poker player he was; was playing not in red-faced anger, but to retrench, to save himself.

Men—such as the home banker and old-time friends who had seen Scollop climb to prosperity from small beginnings—went to the cowman and tried to persuade him to quit his gambling. They tried also to dissuade Jack from his grim purpose. Both men turned deaf ears—Scollop because he was trying to get back the thousands upon thousands that Jack had pried out of him; and Jack because he was bent upon the man's utter ruin.

Friends pulled away from Jack. Some of the warm-heartedness for him abated. He was regarded as cold-blooded. He did become wolfish again. People avoided him. But what he lost Scollop did not gain. The

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county stood opposed to the ranchman, was glad to see him "getting his lesson."

One night, his heavy shoulders hunched over the green-topped table in the Den, Scollop lost his last chips to Jack.

"Write a check and buy some more," urged Jack. "It is too early in the evening to go home yet."

But Jack knew that Scollop could not write a check because he had no funds left in the bank. Scollop turned his blood-shot eyes on the youth in a dour and dangerous fashion.

"You think you've got me broke, don't you?" he snarled.

It was the first time that Scollop had conceded, even thus indirectly, that Jack or any other being could injure *him*.

"No," answered Jack. "I haven't got you broke yet. You still have your land, your one hundred and two sections—your sixty-five thousand acres. But that is *all* you have left."

Scollop's red eyes burned. His thick fingers twitched. But there was nothing to say. He got up and lumbered out heavily without a word.

The next day he and his silent old wife started for San Antonio. The talk was to the effect that the cowman went to mortgage his land.

IT WAS Smith the druggist who gave important news to Jack a few days later. He did it in two words—

"Scollop's back."

"Yeah?"

"Came in two hours ago. They say he brought a hundred and fifty thousand simoleons."

"He brought a hundred and twenty thousand."

"You talk positive."

"I know. I had a man in San Antone keepin' the calipers on him."

"Say, you're not missing anything, are you!"

Smith was scintillant with admiration. Jack shrugged indifferently.

"This isn't the time to miss anything," he retorted.

"A hundred and twenty thousand—Old Dug certainly raised all that a mortgage was worth."

"I'd made some inquiry. He got about twenty thousand more than anybody thought he would, considering that a lot of it is poor land and money isn't any too plentiful."

"Why do you suppose he went the limit? You'd think he would borrow, say fifty thousand, and go back for more if he needed it."

"Well," answered Jack, staring absently into space, "his nanny's been twistin' at the hitching-post. I think he wants to get this over with, win or lose.

"Well—" Jack stretched to his slim, full height in a yawn— "I'll accommodate him. Right away now I'll relieve him of the responsibility of keeping money overnight."

"Be careful after you've done it," warned the druggist. "Old Dug has got red in his eye and a stinger in that scabbard o' his."

"One more week of this," declared Jack. "Then I'll start on a trip around the world. See what gambling is like on the ocean liners."

PROGNOSTICATION in gambling, even with cold decks and fixed players, is a tricky business. At the end of a week Scollop was still burdened with the responsibility of money over night and Jack continued to angle, playing the game honestly and above board.

Funny thing too about luck in gambling. Man can run along in a winning or losing streak for months, as Jack and Old Dug had done, and then see the tables reversed without warning.

It happened with these two.

See-sawing back and forth with the mentality of the two men getting raggeder and raggeder—with even Jack's calmness and poise beginning to slip its moorings—the old bird "Luck" suddenly settled down on the back of Scollop's chair and stuck there.

Night after night Jack lost, one thousand, two thousand, once as high as six thousand five hundred.

Only the two played now, though Smith and Kennard never failed to be present. First one person then another would join the company for a night. If too many appeared Jack would quit and go home.

The playing was too high for others to get in. Old Dug and Jack agreed that white chips should have a value of ten dollars; red ones, one hundred dollars; and the blue, one thousand dollars. They never started a game now with less than a thousand dollars each. They used their personal

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checks, agreeing on their honor never to stop payment at the bank.

Curiously enough Scollop did not respond with his old bull-dozing and arrogance. He played hunched over the table, like a dogged red-eyed bear, growling and watchful and resentful.

"If he'd bite yuh he'd pisen yuh," declared Kennard.

But he won, and won, and won.

And Jack Monfort lost his nerve. He had been relying on his keen observation, his sound judgment. But all at once he lost confidence in these qualities. It turned him panicky. In frightened imagination he saw his winnings spilling through his fingers into Scollop's pockets. He turned to crookedness to rescue him.

Jack had learned the process of cold deck switching and dealing from the bottom but had never acquired dexterity at it. He at once began to practise the malicious art, spending hours every day at it. His fingers were supple. He knew the feel of a card better than anything else in the world. He acquired skill rapidly.

Both Jack and Scollop had insisted on dealing, instead of allowing either Smith or Kennard to deal all the time. They dealt alternately. It was Jack's final plan to stack the cards some night when luck and skill coordinated to favor him and then deal alternately from top to bottom—his own from the bottom by a single-handed dealing trick that he had perfected. With any luck at all he could do this without being seen.

Scollop's attitude was in Jack's favor: The cowman pushed the playing impatiently, like an aggressive boxer, as if eager to get his money all back and get the suspense over with. He played hard, almost recklessly.

The old man's age begun to show and his eyes to do him tricks in vision. He played sullenly.

And Jack drew on toward the time when he would attempt his dishonest trick.

BIG events frequently spring upon the sons of men with all the unexpectedness of wood beasts dropping down from trees.

Without warning the big game was on between the two men.

It was one night when a cold norther was blowing and the roof thundered under its pressure. Only the two principals and Smith and Kennard and a sixty-dollar a month, kid cow-hand were present.

After almost every bet Old Dug reached out his rake-like hands and dragged in the costly chips. Jack wrote check after check. Thousands of dollars slipped away from him. Once he shivered, and flung out raggedly to Kennard—

"For ——'s sake, make up the fire!"

Kennard went down to the back yard of the store and brought up an arm-load of boards from boxes, with bright nails sticking through them, and mended the fire in the little, old tin stove. The wind, blowing its breath down the chimney, kept puffing smoke out into the room. It got into eyes and nostrils and disturbed.

Jack, striving for a chance to stack the cards against Scollop, thought of this as a smoke-screen most decidedly in his favor. He keened himself to turn the crooked trick and stop the avalanche that was sweeping away his wealth and his chance to do for the cowman. He had it in mind to deal a set of four of a kind to himself and a full house to Scollop.

But luck was against him. Scollop watched too closely. The cards did not come right.

The cowman made an unexpectedly large bet. Jack did not have enough chips to call.

"You can buy more!" flung out Scollop. "Unless you're a quitter."

"I'm not certain," replied Jack as quietly as he could, "whether I have any funds left in the bank. Kennard, how much have I written checks for tonight?"

The garage man, keeping careful account, found the checks in his cigar-box and named the amount—in excess of a hundred thousand dollars. Somehow the way he said the total was staggering. Scollop involuntarily uttered a groan.

"My blood and bone is in that!" he said. And then he added, "And I've got it!"

His hands clutched at the chips in front of him as if he would shield and protect them.

"Git my steers and horses and land back with these," he muttered. "Old woman and me."

Jack wrote another check, for seven thousand, and said that when it was gone he was broke.

This curious, unspectacular, almost secret, playing went on. Sometimes when Jack had thought of it, the affair did not seem

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real. An old pioneer losing his home, his accumulation of forty, sixty years, to a boy across a green table, and now to be winning it back again in chunks comparable to carloads of steers or whole remudas. Once Smith had expressed the strangeness of it all as these men felt it:

"I think I'm dreaming. Here's the biggest game in Texas right under my nose and I ain't hardly excited at all. It don't seem natural and life-size. 'Twouldn't s'prize me to wake up and find it a dream."

And now in the end for Jack's luck to have changed! The watchers saw the wealth go back to the old ranchman with jealousy squinted eyes.

With his last money dribbling through his fingers Jack tried to play cautiously. He asked himself what was the matter with his judgment. He weighed each hand carefully. At the same time he strove to arrange the crooked deal. Repeated failure to succeed at it made him panicky. And Scollop noticed this.

"What you tremblin' about?" he sneered abruptly out of his bearish silence. "What you slackin' up for? Y'ain't aiming to quit with two, three thousand dollars left, are ye?"

For the first time in weeks Scollop laughed out blusteringly.

"You're the man that was going to do for me! Haw-haw-haw!"

"I will yet," replied Jack nastily, "if you don't turn quitter."

Then without warning another shift came in this strange playing. As quickly as Jack's luck went flittering it came back again. One hand, two, three—the money flowed back to him.

Scollop, having pushed his luck and won, kept pushing it to win again but the avalanche against him did not abate.

Jack forgot his proposed crookedness in trying to take care of the hands that came to him in the ordinary dealing and cutting.

Hard red splotches appeared on the cowman's cheeks. The rest of his face was gray. He hunched lower and lower and his eyes grew redder and redder. And now and then to stifle a groan he breathed like a windbroken horse.

It was Scollop's turn to write checks. His thick fingers trembled. It was plain from the amount of chips he was forced to buy that his money was getting low. He seemed to grow older under their eyes.

Once in blundering through his pockets for his check book his shaking fingers drew out a little package done up in white paper. Puzzled, he tried to unwrap it, but his fingers shook too much. He handed it to Kennard.

"Unwrap it."

Kennard peeled off the paper and showed a spool of white thread. Thread for his old woman—the old woman he was robbing. With distended eyes he reached out and snatched for the object, perhaps to get the reminder out of sight before it could undo his remaining nerve.

Somehow this made Scollop just an old man, broken in health and mentality—a sort of frantic wreck whose hope was flinging away on a flood.

To hide the picture, Kennard mended the fire again, and Smith pretended to warm. Smith spoke with an awkward gentleness:

"Mr. Scollop, I expect you're cold back there. Won't you leave off the game for tonight and come and warm up?"

Scollop did not answer. He picked up a fresh dealing of cards—and had to use both hands to hold them, he trembled so.

Luck shifted again and gave him a slight reprieve. And out of this pause of the wheel of Old Lady Fortune came the last hand of poker between this old man and this youth.

Scollop finished a deal, clumsy now and pitiful, and laying down the pack picked up his five cards. When he saw them a cunning look flashed into his red, ratty eyes. He peered out at Jack. He looked at the stacks of chips between them. He cleared his throat in a kind of high squeal.

Scollop bet three blue chips—three thousand dollars. Jack called and raised five blue chips. The old cowman laid his cards down and gripped his shaking hands together.

"I been drinking too much coffee," he said apologetically. "It has made me shaky."

It was a pitiful excuse. But he strengthened his words by adding—

"But I ain't too shaky to be as quick on the draw as I ever was!"

Scollop studied Jack a moment out of his fiery eyes. And then he put his hands behind his chips and shoved them all to the center of the table.

"We've got about the same amount," he said quaveringly. "Bet 'em all to get this over with. Won't you? I'm—I'm shaky.

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And —— you," he swore in a great oath, "I've got you beat!"

Jack laid down his cards and likewise shoved in all of his chips without counting. And he looked Scollop straight in the eye. Scollop gave back the look, moment after moment, and what he saw told him that Jack had him beaten.

Scollop quit trembling. His eyes turned hard and murderous. Then with no more warning than that, his old right hand shot to the butt of his gun in the scabbard at his waist. The gun slid out.

But Jack moved too. Before the muzzle of the old man's revolver was out of the scabbard, Jack's automatic was stuck straight into Scollop's face.

Scollop slacked his hostile movement, and slowly his gun dropped back.

For a little time the two regarded each other, Scollop sitting, Jack standing looking down at him. And then Jack spoke:

"Scollop, there are three qualifications for a gambler. I've got you beat in knowing the game. I've got you beat on the draw. But the third qualification—well, Scollop, it's got me beat. It has ruined me."

Jack put his gun back in its holster. The old man watched him in wonder.

"Tomorrow," said Jack, "I'm going to hunt a job as demonstrator for an arms company. I've gambled my last professional game."

Jack went to the door, and with his back to the panels and his hand on the knob, looked at them. He felt profoundly sorry for Scollop; a poor, broken old man that most of the county seemed opposed to. Then without a word he went out.

Scollop straightened up. His chest shoved out.

"Hooo!" he roared. "He thought he could do for Old Dug!"

Smith the druggist reached out and turned over the cards that Jack had thrown down and forgot to conceal in the pack.

They composed a royal flush of spades.

"My ——!" said Scollop. "He had me beat!"

"The third qualification," said Smith, thoughtfully shoving the cards apart with a slow forefinger and then looking up at the broken old man, "was to love your fellowmen."

DERELICTS

by William R. Barbour

PARAGUAY has long been a favorite refuge for men from other climes who for one reason or another felt better with many miles between them and their native countries. In the following examples it would obviously have been unkind to give too definite details.

In a village not far from Asunción lives a baron from one of the oldest and noblest houses in Prussia. On the wall of his mud-floored hut hangs an affectionately autographed photograph of Wilhelm II. The baron, like his Paraguayan wife and brood of children, goes barefoot habitually, yet clings to a monocle, last remnant of his vanished splendor.

Working on an isolated cattle-camp is the brother of the royal equerry of a Scandinavian king. His story includes a duel with a semi-royal scion over the affections of a girl. Of his Viking-like strength and beauty, *caña*, native rum, is slowly robbing him.

An American ex-cowboy has been more fortunate. He claims to have once been a member of the Texas Rangers, but it is commonly thought that he had been "about two jumps ahead of the Rangers." At any rate Paraguay seems to agree with his health, and his knowledge of the cattle game and lightning ability with a Colt's .45 have stood him in good stead.

At the end of the American Civil War certain un-reconcilables from the South migrated to Latin America rather than accept defeat. One man, prominent in the Confederate navy—his family name has been given to a town, a county, and a college in North Carolina—settled in Paraguay. Late in life he married a Paraguayan girl, and his son, now a grown man, can barely speak English.

Poor derelicts! What brave ships you once were! What stormy seas you sailed! May your battered hulks rest quietly on the peaceful sands where at last you have stranded!

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Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

SOMETHING from an old-timer of the sea, of the day of sails. And why has he stood back in the shadows so long?

San Jose, California.

For many years I have stood in the shadows watching Camp-Fire burn, hoping, longing, listening, wondering if some day if I could muster up enough courage to edge up and warm my shins and sit and listen to those who have found adventure, that fickle jade, who has ever beckoned me on, only to give me the Ha! Ha!

If it were not for your writers (more power to them!) of *Adventure* who tell such plausible tales, would say there was no such an animal. Romance, yes, we are twins, and during past years, from Lowell, Boston, New Orleans, Lake Charles, San Francisco, Oregon, Washington, California, Texas and seven years before the mast in five of the seven seas, I have roamed. Sloop of war, 18 guns, skysail gardens, brigs, barks, brigantines, fore-and-aft schooners, four-masted schooners, racing shells, canoes. Yes, I have loved the Lady—such caressing, wholesome, loving (Oh out-of-door ways) Lady! Were my liver and gizzard as they were some 50 years and more ago, would chase the old rip some more, but realize am a has-been.

BUT how I do enjoy the Camp-Fire. Then comes Questions and Answers. Say, but they ring true, as I have seen some. Can enjoy same reading. Honolulu, Lahina, Upapalakua, Pahala, St. Helena, Cape Stiff, Cork, Spike Island, English Channel, St. Helena, Antwerp, Rotterdam, Singapore, Rangoon, Anger Point. When went into Anger Point we dropped mud-hook after letting everything go by the run and had a crowd of bullies come out and make everything snug. We were unable to go aloft or even hang on if we did. Nine days with only brackish water to drink, made into coffee and tea. Chips left the cap of water-tank off and she shipped a few green seas into the fresh water. Crossed the pond several times—Montreal, Quebec, New York. Last time I left New York, December second, mate pounding on braces, breaking ice so braces would go through sheave holes. Last time I crossed the pond was in

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old Black Ball Packet *Isaac Webb*, next to last trip she made. Wish some of now-a-days deckhands could make a trip in her with a couple of bucko mates. Fo'c'sle double bunks, slush lamps. Pumped her three hours and twenty minutes when she was on port tack. Mahogany and salt-horse cracker-hash that wiggled, flavored with slush. Hard tack with accent on the "hard." Wonder what they'd think if, when they stuck their head over the rail, they (the mates) took his sheath-knife and broke the point of it and handed it back.

THERE was a day when it took all hands all day to set up weather rigging. Then the day came when a bloke went all round with a monkey-wrench and set it up in one watch. There was a day when they had wooden ships and iron sailors, now they have sent the sailors coasting (few deep water ships), taken ships, stripped the sails, jerked the masts out of them, finally discarded the wood and put old iron pots in their places.

Wonder if Bill Adams won't say Vast hauling, Belay, or Pipe Down.—EDWARD P. SMITH.

P. S. Oh yes, I crossed the Isthmus in 1872 from New York to San Francisco.

P. S. No. 2. Yes, I drove a buggy from San Antonio, Texas, through Oklahoma, Ind. Ter., across Kansas, through Colorado, to Salt Lake in 1890.

P. S. No. 3. Yes, have seen some, but no adventure, only Romance. Never was a lucky beggar, anyhow.

THIS looks right to me. Most of you know that Thomson Burtis spent years in the Air Service and that most of the airmen in his stories are drawn from real men. Sometimes when one of them has been killed in the line of duty I've passed the word on to you; but from now on there will be no such reports. And may there be no basis for them.

Hunter, New York.

I am enclosing a letter from Dr. Gray, because it mentions a point which has been brought up to me several times in letters from readers.

They seem to dislike learning that the boys are dead!

I very frequently meet, in a casual way, readers of *Adventure*, and I have frequently felt highly complimented, in an indirect way, because they seem to feel so intimately acquainted with the little bunch of flyers I have written about. It surprised me to find out how friendly they feel toward *Captain Kennard* and *Tex MacDowell* and *Sleepy Spears* and *Jimmy Jennings*.

HERE'S the point. From time to time there will be opportunity to have a note in Camp-Fire telling of the finish of some character. In fact, two more have popped off lately. I have heard men mention so often that they rather hated to hear the news that I thought it might be an argument against publishing it. Writing so much about the same characters as I do, I guess it is inevitable that readers feel that way, if they like the stories at all. You can't read about a bunch for three or four years, off and on, without getting friendly with them.

This is probably much ado about nothing, but the attitude of Dr. Gray has impressed me because I have heard the same thing at least twenty times before.—THOMSON BURTIS.

AND what might this be? Lizard, eft or what?

Clearwater, Florida.

Having read *Adventure* since the first number, am enclosing clipping from local paper of a strange find here. Perhaps some of the readers might be able to classify same. No one here can, or ever saw one.—E. E. PRESTON.

An unclassified reptile was plowed from the ground, muck land, in Dr. N. E. Mighell's field today. The doctor does not know what it is. No one even ventures a guess as to its classification. It is on exhibition at Sumner's grocery store, being confined to a keg in the back alley. Mr. Sumner will show it to you if you ask to be shown. We have been shown.

The "thing" resembles an eel in general contour. It is about 18 inches long and as large in circumference as a medium-sized banana. Rather stubby. It has a fin along its back like an eel, also a tail of that class. It has a smooth back of green-black running to a dirty yellow on the belly where it has scales like a snake which enables it to crawl. It appears at home in the water, yet its native place appeared to be the earth, as it was plowed up in dry muck land by men who were working for Dr. Mighells. The head is the same size as the body, tapering to a point like an eel, while the mouth is big and wide.

The queerest part of the "critter," however, is that just back of the gills there are two small feet, with claws, very similar to those of an alligator.

The reptile, for it must surely belong to that family, is quick in motion and resents being poked with a stick, striking like a snake to show its anger.

A NATURALIZED citizen talking. Incidentally, a member of our writers' brigade. You will find that many of the strongest advocates of more stringent immigration laws are themselves naturalized citizens. They have *seen* what kind of material is admitted, the laxness of enforcement, the lack of dignity and patriotic interest by the officials, and all the other things that help make immigration one of the greatest dangers this country faces. It would be a splendid thing if every native-born American were compelled to look on at the actual ceremonies of admitting foreigners to our citizenship.

The two points F. R. Buckley makes are good ones and I'd like to add a third—that, whenever a naturalized citizen is sent to the penitentiary or deported, the judge, the recommenders and every one responsible

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in more than a clerical way for the admission of that unfit foreigner should be publicly bulletined and penalized by law. That would make our immigration officials considerably more careful and conservative than they are.

Also, the admission to citizenship of a foreigner by an ignoring of any point in the laws governing admission should be made a penitentiary offense for all concerned.

But all these things are merely patches. The only safe, logical, patriotic course is—stop all immigration.

Norwalk, Connecticut.

You know, I am—was—an Irishman myself; just finished getting naturalized the other day. With some pride I hereby swear that never, before taking the new oath of allegiance, did I suggest any improvements on the United States; but now that I'm a licensed inhabitant I do want one law altered—and it's the naturalization law. I want it tightened up tremendously. I don't want any more people admitted who have been arrested and fined twice for violating the liquor law, and who think Independence Day is the 17th of September. Yes, I'm describing an actual case that I witnessed myself.

For another thing, I'd make it law that the two recommenders of the applicant for naturalization be Americans by birth. Mine were—I took pains to have them so; because, if I'm to be invited in, it seems that the proprietors, and not the guests, are the people to do the inviting.

May be pride of authorship, but I think this last's a good idea.—F. R. Buckley.

DON'T forget that "Still Farther Ahead," added to "The Trail Ahead," now gives you a general survey of what the next four issues of our magazine will contain.

ONE of you puts forward the Air Service as a real chance for real adventure:

Army at Large.

How many of these gathered 'round the Camp-Fire know that adventure, the A-1 article, lies within their grasp? I refer now to the chance offered by the Army Air Service to those who can qualify to learn the flying game.

TO GET down to brass tacks. You have to be between 21 and 27 years of age; married or single makes no difference. Also have a high school education *or its equivalent*, be practically physically perfect, have enough "savvy" to get by a board of very "savvy" examining officers and, finally, have a fierce craving to be an aviator. You must be willing to "sign up" for the length of the training period, usually from 10 months to a year in duration; and as a Flying Cadet be subject to military laws and discipline.

In return you get the following. A monthly pay of $75 with uniforms gratis, and chow at a mess with a $1 daily ration. A thorough course in airplanes, airplane engines and accessories, aerial navigation, aerodynamics, machine gunnery and theoretical and practical military training. At the termination of the course you receive your discharge as a Flying Cadet and revert back to civil life; and if you have the proper get-up and bearing are commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Air Service Officers' Reserve Corps, on inactive status. With this reserve commission you are entitled to fly at will upon reporting to the nearest Army field in your leisure time.

LET me explain that the contract by Uncle Sam is lived up to without evasion. Upon passing the required tests the civilian candidate is given orders and transportation to Brooks Field, near San Antonio, where is situated the Primary Flying School. Within a week or ten days after reporting there he is started on the first of his many flights. It is usually after about 100 hours in the air that the average man has passed the primary stage and is assigned to the specialized branch of advanced flying for which he has shown himself to be best fitted. These are Pursuit, Observation or Bombardment; the advanced school squadrons being at Kelly Field, a few miles distant from Brooks. Once there, he is taught in detail the art of aerial warfare of his branch. There are no catches to the proposition. In fact the flying cadet of war days thinks that the present day K-det leads the life of Riley. I do not believe that the present day Flying Cadet ever is given a speaking knowledge of the ever beloved K.P.

IT IS the whole course that is crammed full of what is really adventure. The first few flights on dual, the first solo where you take your first big chance, the long cross-country flights, the aerial combat practise where you find out how good a flyer you really are, or are not, the practise bombing raids; all are times in your life when you feel that you have not tried in vain to find something worth while in life. The pay is ample, the writer knows of not a few instances where married men have, in the past, taken the course, although the practise of married men entering the course is rather frowned upon by the reviewing authorities.

Since adventure consists of meeting the unusual, of treading new paths, of getting a "kick" out of life, surely here is a gate to that desired field. A letter to the Air Officer of the nearest Army Corps Area Headquarters or to the Office of the Chief of Air Service, Munitions Building, Washington, D. C., should bring you the dope in detail. Take a chance, here's luck.—X. K. Dee.

ONE of you at Camp-Fire in speaking o the Custer Massacre mentioned Lieutenant (Surgeon) William H. Moore and Second Lieutenant Autie Reed as among the slain. An Army officer at Washington points out the error of this statement, gives us real data and in friendly spirit urges that only proven facts, verified and vouched for by the magazine, be admitted to our "Camp-Fire," thus giving it great value to the student of history.

In a way I wish we had a staff of experts

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who would pass on and vouch for all statements admitted to "Camp-Fire's" pages, or even all statements bearing upon history, or even the history of our own country, or even the history of our West. But in that case Camp-Fire would no longer be Camp-Fire, no longer an open forum, a gathering for free and easy discussion of whatever interests us. I should hate to see it changed and so, I think, would most of the rest of you.

And even as it is, when the talking back and forth on a subject is all over, the real facts have generally come to the front. If some one makes a statement that isn't sound, some one else is pretty sure to step forth from California, Maine, Florida, Indiana, Canada, Siam, Peru, Europe, Asia, Africa or Australia and set him right. Camp-Fire isn't a safe place for facts that aren't facts.

THERE are lots of other reasons against changing our easy fellowship at Camp-Fire into an earnest gathering for the collection of systematically proven facts and, unless you amaze me with a majority demand for it, we'll make no such change.

Yet I wish that we of Camp-Fire could perform the much needed service of collecting, sifting, arranging and making acessible to all Americans all the stray odds and ends of facts pertaining to the Old West that escape the historian and the permanent record. Those who knew the Old West at first-hand daily become fewer and fewer. They are historians' "first sources," and they are disappearing rapidly. When they are gone only hearsay and stray bits of record are left for the amplification and verification of history.

There is, literally, no better agency for the collection of such data than is our Camp-Fire. We reach where no other agency reaches, and we reach the particular kinds of men who are best equipped to furnish the data wanted.

THE above is Stanza One, so to speak, in the little song I have to sing. Now as to Stanza Two. As most of you know, our magazine has made a point of teaching the history of our country—teaching it by making it interesting so that the learning is done without effort, teaching it through such stories as Hugh Pendexter's. Not history distorted and violated for the sake of fiction, but history that *is* history. Will any professional historian among you rise up and point out any incorrect history in any one of the many historical serials Hugh Pendexter has given us? Any change of historical facts that he has not conscientiously and in detail called to our attention in his accompanying talks to Camp-Fire? His historical accuracy over the vast amount of ground he has covered is a tremendous accomplishment that sometimes I think some of you do not fully realize. Yet he always gives us stories that, history quite aside, are interesting as stories. The net result is that he is teaching history where no one else can teach it—broadcasting the history of our country and *making it stick*. That accomplishment is worth more than we can measure to a country like ours, nearly half of whose population have come to us from elsewhere, knowing little or none of our history and traditions, of the blood and sweat that went into the making of this country to which they come after the rough-hewing has been done by others. The average school history breeds a dislike for history. What other agencies are there?

I mention Mr. Pendexter specifically because he has done more of this kind of work for us than has any other single writer. He has, in fact, given his life to this work. But you know there are others of our writers' brigade working in the same direction. And of course, writers not our own doing the same kind of work.

There ought to be still more of this kind of living history broadcasted among Americans, native-born as well as foreign-born.

Stanza Three. There ought to be some agency to designate the books, fiction and otherwise, that will help make Americans of all kinds more familiar with the history of this country and of its making, so that we may better understand and appreciate the heritage given into our hands.

Stanza Four. There should be a more comprehensive agency for designating, marking and protecting places of even minor historical interest.

Stanza Five. A large stanza. There are a lot of other similar things that ought to be done.

Stanza Six. Americans, native as well as foreign-born, need helpful, friendly teaching in their obligations and duties as the citizens of this country whose history has, so to speak, been entrusted to their hands for its next chapters.

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Stanza Seven. The need for all these things is daily being rendered more acute by disturbing and threatening forces that we need not stop to enumerate. Things have come to a pass where even the sleepiest Americans are beginning to wake up to the fact that there are breakers ahead.

Stanza Eight. Such corrective movements as have been started among us are mostly those of some class, sect, race or faction, not of just plain Americans. The movement most needed is one by just Americans—of any birth-place, creed, class or faction. Just Americans united for America and having democratic ideals

Stanza Nine. Our Camp-Fire is drawn from all races, creeds, classes and factions.

Stanza Ten. What are we of Camp-Fire going to do about it?

For a year or more Hugh Pendexter, Alex. McLaren and a few others of us have been considering Stanza Ten pretty anxiously. At first we discussed a "Western Association." It was forced upon us that the need is for our whole country, not for just a part of it. And that Canada has a need similar to ours.

WE WERE going to ask all writers (not merely our own) who write fiction, or fact, that makes American history living to living men to make common cause and more or less systematize their efforts. We were going to collect, sift and make accessible data of historical value. We were going to have a whack at most of the above Stanzas. We've written or talked to a number of you about it.

But what at first seemed a comparatively simple thing has broadened upon our vision and grown in importance and difficulty of right execution. We do not feel that we alone are equal to the task of marking out the definite path to be followed. We are asking for your advice and help.

We feel sure of only this: That the heart of the matter is that there should be systematic education of all Americans in the history of the democracy now entrusted to their hands and in their obligations as citizen trustees. Second, that all true Americans, regardless of class, creed or birthplace, should be united and organized against whatever emergency the dangerous present and the dangerous future may bring from whatever source within or without, to America and her ideals of democracy.

WE ASK your advice and help. No one is urged to give either. What is most needed will come from those who see the need and come to meet it of their own accord.

Among other questions we ask this one: Is the following the best general method of procedure? First, agreement on simple, fundamental principles. Agreement on specific ends to be attained. A central organization that will be only a clearing-house, free from autocratic power and from the curse of office seeking. An actual organization to be brought into being by the independent forming of local units affiliated on the common principles for the common ends. Action, policy and executive composition of the general organization to be determined by democratic vote of the local bodies voting as individual members.

That is all. If the nature and volume of your response does not warrant going ahead, we shall make no attempt to force the issue. There is urgent need for the uniting of all good Americans for America. We have no doubts of that. It seems to us that the time is right for it and that Camp-Fire is the best collection of Americans to make the beginning. But Camp-Fire itself must be the judge on these last two points. We merely raise them.

And now to go back to the Custer Massacre. Here is the letter in question and following it is the War Department's official report from Major Reno of the names of the dead. That report makes Camp-Fire about as sure as can be hoped for on at least the one point of who and how many of the Seventh Cavalry lost their lives on the Little Big Horn in June, 1876, in the service of their country. The letter of our Army comrade, which he later gave permission to use, makes it practically impossible for any "survivor" to survive and our thanks go to him for his clean-cut statements and valuable data:

War Department, Washington,
July 9, 1923.

It is to be understood, I suppose, that *Adventure* neither holds itself responsible, nor vouches for the accuracy of statements made by its various Camp-Fire correspondents. On the other hand, some duty, it would seem, should devolve upon the magazine to assist in keeping history reasonably straight, when that can be done by inquiry from authentic sources.

IT WOULD be an easy matter to secure, from the Adjutant General's office, a correct list of the names of all the white persons, both soldiers and

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civilians, who died in the Custer Massacre. Such a list will disclose that no "Lieut. (Surgeon)" William H. Moore was among them; nor was there, upon the rolls of the 7th Cavalry, any such officer or surgeon with the expeditionary forces engaged in the battle of the Little Big Horn.

Nor was there any such officer as "Second Lieutenant" Autie Reed. Autie Reed was a civilian, a boy in his 'teens, the nephew of General Custer, who had joined his uncle and accompanied the regiment o "see some Western life." His body was found, dentified and buried on the field.

THERE is no event in American history that has been so inexcusably misdescribed, distorted and so made a subject of fancy, hallucination and falsehood as the Custer Massacre. Fake "survivors" or "witnesses" began to appear and to narrate fantastic and untruthful tales within a month from the day Custer fell; and hardly a month passes, even now, but that some new disciple of Munchausen arises with an absurd and easily disproven story. Even some of the *real* survivors of the battle have caught the habit and have flirted with the truth in order to make heroes of themselves. Believe me, when I say that if all the alleged "survivors" were genuine; if all the "witnesses" who claim to have seen the passing of Custer and his command had really been among those present, the array of "witnesses" and "survivors" would almost rival the strength of the regiment.

The truth is that of Custer's immediate command—the five troops he led down the river after he sent Reno across to attack, *there was no survivor. Every one was killed.* And the truth also is that, saving and excepting the Indians who took part in the fight, *there were no witnesses to the massacre.*

I have yet to see a single "survivor" or "witness" story (and I think I have read them all), which does not contain within itself the unmistakable earmarks of fraud and falsity, when checked against the established and proven facts. If you can not check them up yourself, General E. S. Godfrey of Cookstown, N. J., the author of "Custer's Last Fight" (Century, 1892) would, I think, gladly edit these Custer tales for you, and Colonel Varnum of San Francisco or Colonel Hare of Houston, Texas, would, I have no doubt, be glad to assist; W. M. Camp of Chicago can do it; E. A. Brininstool of Los Angeles can do it; I can do it.

ADVENTURE can render real service to the student of American history, and particularly to the student of Western history, if it makes Camp-Fire a place where *facts*, and only facts, proven or cabable of proof, shall be asserted as such.

This letter is written in no spirit of criticism, nor for publication. I have read every number of *Adventure* from the beginning of its career. It is my favorite magazine; and "Camp-Fire" I always read first. I just don't like to see its confidence abused.

I enclose herewith a correct copy of Reno's report of casualties in the Little Big Horn fight. All officers, surgeons and civilians are accounted for. The name of one Indian Scout ("Stab," I think), was subsequently eliminated, and that of "Little Soldier" substituted. I also enclose a memorandum as to "Lieut." (Surgeon) William H. Moore, just received from the Old Files Division, A. G. O. The facts concerning Autie Reed you can verify from Whittaker's "Life of Custer," which was written by a man who intimately knew Custer and all his family connections and relatives.— —— ——.

Reno's Report

Bvt. Maj. Gen. George A. Custer, Bvt. Lt. Col. W. W. Cooke, Asst.-Surg. Lord, Acting Asst. Surg. J. M. De Wolf, Sen. Maj. W. W. Shannon, Chief Trptr. Henry Voss; A. Co., Corpls. Henry Dallous, George H. King, Pvts. John E. Armstrong, James Drinan, William Moody, James McDonald, Richard Rawlins, John Sullivan, Thomas P. Switzer; B. Co., 2nd Lt. Benjamin Hodgson, Pvts. Richard Doran, George Mask; C Co., Bvt. Lt. Col. Thomas W. Custer, 2nd Lieut. H. M. Harrington, 1st Serg. Edwin Baba, Sergts. Finley, Tinkle, Pvts. Short, Shea, French, Foley, Ryan, Allen, Criddle, King, Bucknall, Eisman, Engle, Brightfield, Fanaud, Griffin, Hamel, Hattisal, Kingsoutz, Lewis, Mayer, Mayer Phillips, Russel, Rix, Ranter, Bauth, Connor, Daring, Davis, Shade, Stuart, St. John, Thadius, Van Allen, Warren, Wyndham, Wright; D. Co., Farrier Vincent Charlie, Pvts. Patrick Golden, Edward Hansen; E. Co., Bvt. Capt. A. E. Smith, 2nd Lieut. J. M. Sturgis*, 1st. Sergt. Fred. Hohmeyer, Sergts. Egdan, James, Corpls. Hogan, Mason, Blorm, Meyer, Trptrs. McElroy, Mooney, Pvts. Baker, Boyle; F. Co., Capt. G. W. Yates, 2nd Lieut. W. Van W. Reily, 1st Sergts. Kenney, Nursey; E. Co., Pvts. Davis, Farrell, Hiley, Huber, Hine, Henderson, Henderson, Leddison, O'Connor, Rood, Ruse Smith 1st, Smith 2nd, Smith 3rd, Stella, Stafford, Schoole, Smallwood, Tarr, Vamjant, Walker, Brogen, Knicht, Lasse, Milton Jas., Madson, Monroe, Rudden; F. Co., Sergts. Vickory, Wilkinson, Corpls. Coleman, Teernan, Briody, Farrier Brandon, Blksmith Manning, Pvts. Atchison, Brown 1st, Brown 2nd, Bruce, Brady, Burnham, Cather, Carney, Dohman, Donnelly, Gardiner, Hammon, Kline, Knauth, Luman; H Co., Corpls. Geo. Lell, Julian D. Jones, Thos. E. Meador; I Co., Bvt. Lt. Col. M. W. Keogh, 1st. Lieut. J. E. Porter†, 1st. Sergt. F. E. Varden, Sergt. J. Bustard; F Co., Pvts. Omeling, Sicfous, Sanders, Warren, Way, Lerock, Kelley; G Co., 1st. Lt. Donald McIntosh, Sergts. Edward Botzer, M. Considine, Corpls. Jas. Martin, Otto Hageman, Farrier Benjamin Wells, Trptr. Henry Dose, Saddler Crawford Selby, Pvts. Benj. F. Rogers, Andrew J. Moore, John J. McGinniss, Edward Stanley, Henry Seafferman, John Rapp; I Co., Pvts. E. P. Lloyd, A. McIlhargey, J. Michell, J. Noshang, J. O'Bryan, J. Parker, F. J. Pitter, George Post, Corpls. John Wilde, G. O. Morris, S. F. Staples, Trptrs. J. McGucker, J. Patton, Blacksmith H. A. Bailey, Pvts. J. F. Broadhurst, J. Bany, J. Comas, W. P. Dawning, E. C. Driscoll, D. C. Gillette, G. H. Gross, E. P. Holcomb, M. E. Horn, Adam Hetismir, P. Kelley, Fred Lehman, Henry Lehman; L Co. Corp. Seiller, Trptr. Walsh, Pvts. Adams, Assdely, Burke, Cheever, McGiee, McCarthy, Dugan; I Co., Pvts. Jas. Quinn, William Reed, J. W. Rossbury, D. L. Synuns, J. E. Tray, Chas. Van Bramer, W. B. Whaley; K Co., 1st Sergt. D. Winney, Sergt. R. Hughes, Corpl. J. J. Callehan, Trptr. Julius Helmer, Pvt. Eli M. T. Clair; L Co., 1st Lt. James Calhoun, Lieut. 30th Inf. J. J. Crittenden, 1st Sergt. Butler, Sergt. Warren, Corpls.

*The body of Lieut. Sturgis was not found, but it is reasonably certain he was killed.

†The body of Lieut. Porter was not found, but it is reasonably certain he was killed.

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Harrison, Gilbert, Pvts. Keefe, Andrews, Crisfield, Harrington, Hangge, Kavanaugh, Labering, Mahoney, Schmidt, Simon, Maxwell, Scott, Babcock, Perkins, Tarbox, Dye, Tessier, Galvis, Graham, Hamilton, Rodgers, Snow, Hughes, Miller, Tweed, Veller, Cashan, Semenson, Riebald, O'Connell; M Co. Sergt. Miles F. O'Hara, Corps. Henry M. Scallier, Fred Stringer, Henry Gordon, H. Klotzbursher, G. Lawrence, W. D. Meyer, G. E. Smith, D. Somers, J. Tanner, H. Turley, H. C. Vogt; Civilians: Boston Custer, Arthur Reed, Mark Kellog, Charles Reynolds, Frank C. Mann. Indian Scouts: Bloody Knife, Bobtailed Bull, Stab. Total Number of commissioned officers killed—14; Act. Asst. Surg.—1; enlisted men—247; civilians—5; Indian Scouts—3.

July 11, 1923.

Supplementing my letter of yesterday to you, upon the quotation from Mr. James D. Moore's letter in your July 10th number Camp-Fire communications I enclose you herewith a statement just received by me from the Cemeterial Branch of the Quartermaster General's Office.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) —— ——.

WAR DEPARTMENT
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
OLD FILES DIVISION
WASHINGTON

Mr. Davies:

See if you can get any record of the death of Surgeon Wm. H. Moore, referred to above.

Make special—phone.

Information has been promised today (For Dr. Holmes for —— ——). A. A. D.

7/9/23

—— —— wishes clipping returned.

Old Files	(no record)
201 (personnel	(no record)
Officers Record Sec	(no record)
Med. Sec	(no record)
Regular Army Sec	(no record)
Organization Rec. Sec	(no record)

Clipping.

July 11, 1923.

MEMORANDUM FOR: —— ——
Room 2101, Munitions Building.

1. This office has no photograph of the monument on the Custer Battlefield, which contains the names of those who were killed in that battle. The records however, show that the following named officers were killed in the Custer Massacre, but the name of Lieut. Surgeon William H. Moore is not among them, nor does it appear in Heightman's Book of Officers.

Maj. Gen'l A. Custer
Captain Myles W. Keogh
Captain George W. Yates
Captain Thos. W. Custer
Lieut. Wm. W. Cooke
Lieut. Algernon E. Smith
Lieut. Donald McIntosh
Lieut. James Calhoun
Lieut. J. E. Porter
Lieut. B. H. Hodgson
Lieut. J. G. Sturgis
2nd Lieut. Wm. Van W. Reily
2nd Lieut. H. M. Harrington
2nd Lieut. J. J. Crittenden
Assistant Surgeon G. E. Lord
Assistant Surgeon J. M. DeWolf

(Signed) H. D. Saxton.

DON'T forget that most of our original cover paintings are for sale to the highest bidders. Send in your bid any time. Covers will be sent express collect to highest bidders one month after the magazine has appeared on the news stands. No bids of less than ten dollars per cover considered. In case two readers bid the same amount for one cover it will be sent to the one whose bid was first received.

LAST call for our annual vote by readers on the best ten stories published by our magazine during 1922. Voting is an easy matter. Any one can vote. Here are the particulars:

All you need to do is write the titles and authors' names of the ten stories you consider best, given in order of preference, and mail us the sheet of paper to reach us not later than December thirty-first. If you like, add as many as ten more for honorable mention. As in the past years, short stories, novelettes, novels and serials are included, poems, Camp-Fire and the other departments are barred out. The issues covered are those dated January 10, 1923, to December 30, 1923, inclusive. Serials only parts of which are contained in these issues are included.

We very sincerely want your cooperation and help in getting for *Adventure* the kind of story and the authors that a majority of our readers like best. If you know of a better way of furthering this cooperation than is the annual vote of readers, name it, for we are ready to try any legitimate plan that will help register your wishes in the making of the magazine. It's not only common sense to strive for this but it's a lot happier and more comfortable all around if people work together in friendly fashion.

SERVICES TO OUR READERS

Lost Trails, for finding missing relatives and friends, runs in alternate issues from "Old Songs that Men Have Sung."

Old Songs That Men Have Sung, a section of "Ask Adventure," runs in alternate issues from "Lost Trails."

Camp-Fire Stations: explanation in the first and third issues of each month. Full list in first issue of each month.

Various Practical Services to Any Reader: Free Identification Card in eleven languages (metal, 25 cents); Mail Address and Forwarding Service; Back Issues Exchanged; Camp-Fire Buttons, etc., runs in the last issue of each month.

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VARIOUS PRACTICAL SERVICES TO ANY READER

These services of *Adventure*, mostly free, are open to any one. They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we ask in return only that you **read and observe the simple rules,** thus saving needless delay and trouble for us. The whole spirit of the magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we can help we're ready and willing to try. **Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.**

Identification Cards

Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address, (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, each printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Metal Cards—For twenty-five cents we will send you *post-paid*, the same card in aluminum composition, perforated at each end. Enclose a self-addressed return envelope, but no postage. Twenty-five cents covers everything. Give same data as for pasteboard cards. Holders of pasteboard cards can be registered under both pasteboard and metal cards if desired, but old numbers can not be duplicated on metal cards. If you no longer wish your old card, destroy it carefully and notify us, to avoid confusion and possible false alarms to your friends registered under that card.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying.*

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Back Issues of *Adventure*

The Boston Magazine Exchange, 24 T Wharf, Boston, Mass., can supply Adventure *back through* 1918, *and occasional copies before that.*

WILL SELL: All issues 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921 and 1922. Some odd copies of 1923. 200 issues in all. What offers?—Address E. W. WITZAK, 390 Hickory St., Allentown, Pa.

WILL SELL: April, 1917; 1st Feb., Mid-Nov., 1st and Mid-Dec. 1918; all of 1919 except Mid-Nov.; 1st Jan., 1st and Mid-Feb., Dec. 20th, 1921; Jan. 10th, 1922. All covers intact and in excellent condition. Four dollars, postpaid.—Address ORVILLE L. MAY, 643 Oakwood Ave., Columbus, Ohio.

WILL SELL: 1918, complete; all 1919, except Mid-Nov.; all 1920, except Mid-July, 1st May, Mid-May; all 1921, all 1922. All covers, except three, intact. Best offer takes lot; or will sell yearly volumes.—Address A. E. GREENWOOD, 228 N. Main St., Pleasantville, N. J.

WILL SELL: All issues from 2nd June, 1921 to last March, 1923. Sixty-one copies. Price $7.50.—Address H. P. SHATTUCK, 137 East Adams St., Los Angles, Calif.

WILL SELL: All issues, 1920 to 1923, five cents per copy; all issues, 1911 to 1920, ten cents per copy.—Address RICHARD ZORN, North Baltimore, Ohio.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscript. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3,000 welcomed.

Camp-Fire Stations

Our Camp-Fire is extending its Stations all over the world. Any one belongs who wishes to. Any member desiring to meet those who are still hitting the trails may maintain a Station in his home or shop where wanderers may call and receive such hospitality as the Keeper wishes to offer. The only requirements are that the Station display the regular sign, provide a box for mail to be called for and keep the regular register book and maintain his Station in good repute. Otherwise Keepers run their Stations to suit themselves and are not responsible to this magazine or representative of it. List of Stations and further details are published in the Camp-Fire in the first issue of each month. Address letters regarding stations to J. Cox.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Missing Friends or Relatives

(*See Lost Trails*)

Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied.

Addresses

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

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Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and *full* postage, *not attached,* are enclosed. (See footnote at bottom of page.) Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

1. The Sea Part 1 American Waters
BERIAH BROWN, 1624 Biegelow Ave., Olympia, Wash. Ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (*See next section.*)

2. The Sea Part 2 British Waters
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care *Adventure*. Seamanship, navigation, old-time sailorizing, ocean-cruising, etc. Questions on the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire go to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown.

3. The Sea Part 3 Statistics of American Shipping
HARRY E. RIESENBERG, 3633 New Hampshire Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C. Historical records, tonnages, names and former names, dimensions, services, power, class, rig, builders, present and past ownerships, signals, etc., of all vessels of the American Merchant Marine and Government vessels in existence over five gross tons in the United States, Panama and the Philippines, and the furnishing of information and records of vessels under American registry as far back as 1760.

4. Islands and Coasts Part 1 Islands of Indian and Atlantic Oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care *Adventure*. Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*See next section.*)

5. Islands Part 2 Haiti, Santo Domingo, Porto Rico, Virgin and Jamaica Groups
CHARLES BELL EMERSON, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif. Languages, mining, minerals, fishing, sugar, fruit and tobacco production.

6. ★ New Zealand; and the South Sea Islands Part 1 Cook Islands, Samoa
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. Travel, history, customs; adventure, exploring, sport. (*Postage ten cents.*)

7. South Sea Islands Part 2 French Oceania (Tahiti, the Society, Paumoto, Marquesas); Islands of Western Pacific (Solomons, New Hebrides, Fiji, Tonga); of Central Pacific (Guam, Ladrone, Pelew, Caroline, Marshall, Gilbert, Ellice); of the Detached (Wallis, Penrhyn, Danger, Easter, Rotuma, Futuna, Pitcairn).
CHARLES BROWN, JR., P. O. Box 308, San Francisco, Calif. Inhabitants, history, travel, sports, equipment, climate, living conditions, commerce, pearling, vanilla and coconut culture.

8. ★ Australia and Tasmania
FRANK MORTON, care *Triad* magazine, 19 Castlereagh St., Sydney, Australia. Customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, history. (*Postage ten cents.*)

9. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
FAY-COOPER COLE, Ph. D., Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, inhabitants, history, institutions.

10. ★ New Guinea
L. P. B. ARMIT, Port Moresby, Territory of Papua, *via* Sydney, Australia. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, inhabitants, history, institutions. Questions regarding the measures or policy of the Government or proceedings of Government officers not answered. (*Postage ten cents.*)

11. Philippine Islands
BUCK CONNOR, L. B. 4., Quartzsite, Ariz. History, inhabitants, topography, customs, travel, hunting, fishing, minerals, agriculture, commerce.

12. Hawaiian Islands and China
F. J. HALTON, 714 Marquette Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Customs, travel, natural history, resources, agriculture, fishing, hunting.

★ *(Enclose addressed envelop with ten cents in stamps NOT attached)*

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13. Japan
GRACE P. T. KNUDSON, Castine, Me. Commerce, politics, people, customs, history, geography, travel, agriculture, art, curios.

14. Asia Part 1 Arabia, Persia, India, Tibet, Burma, Western China, Borneo
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, Morgan City, La. Hunting, exploring, traveling, customs.

15. Asia Part 2 Siam, Andamans, Malay Straits, Straits Settlements, Shan States and Yunnan
GORDON MACCREAGH, 21 East 14th St., New York. Hunting, trading, traveling, customs.

16. Asia Part 3 Coast of Northeastern Siberia, and Adjoining Waters
CAPTAIN C. L. OLIVER, P. O. Box 2882, Tampa, Florida. Natives, language, mining, trading, customs, climate. Arctic Ocean: Winds, currents, depths, ice conditions, walrus-hunting.

17. Asia Part 4 North China, Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan
GEORGE W. TWOMEY, M. D., 41 Rue de France, Tientsin, China. Natives, languages, trading, customs, climate and hunting.

18. Africa Part 1 Sierra Leone to Old Calabar, West Africa, Southern and Northern Nigeria
ROBERT SIMPSON, care *Adventure*. Labor, trade, expenses, outfitting, living conditions, tribal customs, transportation.

19. ✠ Africa Part 2 Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East, Uganda and the Upper Congo
CHARLES BEADLE, Ile de Lerne, par Vannes, Morbihan, Brittany, France. Geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, adventure and sport. (*Postage 12 cents.*)

20. Africa Part 3 Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal and Zululand
CAPTAIN F. J. FRANKLIN, care Adventurers' Club of Chicago, 40 South Clark St., Chicago, Ill. Climate, shooting and fishing, imports and exports; health resorts, minerals, direct shipping routes from U. S., living conditions, travel, opportunities for employment. Free booklets on: Orange-growing, apple-growing, sugar-growing, maize-growing; viticulture; sheep and fruit ranching.

21. ✠ Africa Part 4 Portuguese East
R. G. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

22. Africa Part 5 Morocco
GEORGE E. HOLT, care *Adventure*. Travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

23. Africa Part 6 Tripoli
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, Morgan City, La. Including the Sahara Tuaregs and caravan routes. Traveling, exploring, customs, caravan trade.

24. Africa Part 7 Egypt, Tunis, Algeria
(Editor to be appointed.) Travel, history, ancient and modern; monuments, languages, races, customs, commerce.

25. Africa Part 8 Sudan
W. T. MOFFAT, Sudan Customs, Khartoum, Sudan, Egypt. Climate, prospects, trading, traveling, customs, history. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

26. Turkey and Asia Minor
(Editor to be appointed.) Travel, history, geography, races, languages, customs, trade opportunities.

27. Bulgaria, Roumania
(Editor to be appointed.) Travel, history, topography, languages, customs, trade opportunities.

28. Albania
ROBERT S. TOWNSEND, 1447 Irving St., Washington, D. C. History, politics, customs, languages, inhabitants, sports, travel, outdoor life.

29. Jugo-Slavia and Greece
LIEUT. WILLIAM JENNA, Plattsburg Barracks, N. Y. History, politics, customs, geography, language, travel, outdoor life.

30. Scandinavia
ROBERT S. TOWNSEND, 1447 Irving St., Washington, D. C. History, politics, customs, language, inhabitants, sports, travel, outdoor life.

31. Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Poland
FRED F. FLEISCHER, 464 Park Ave., West New York, N. J. History, politics, customs, languages, trade opportunities, travel, sports, outdoor life.

32. South America Part 1 Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

33. South America Part 2 Venezuela, the Guianas and Brazil
WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, Room 423 Fisk Bldg., Broadway at 57th St., New York. Travel, history, customs, industries, topography, inhabitants, languages, hunting and fishing.

34. South America Part 3 Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay
WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, Room 423, Fisk Bldg., Broadway at 57th St., New York. Geography, travel, agriculture, cattle, timber, inhabitants, camping and exploration, general information.

35. Central America
CHARLES BELL EMERSON, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif. Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, languages, game, conditions, minerals, trading.

36. Mexico Part 1 Northern
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Border States of old Mexico—Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Minerals, lumbering, agriculture, travel, customs, topography, climate, inhabitants, hunting, history, industries.

37. Mexico Part 2 Southern; and Lower California
C. R. MAHAFFEY, So. Pac. Extra Gang 21, S. P. Depot, San Francisco, Calif. Lower California; Mexico south of a line from Tampico to Mazatlan. Mining, agriculture, topography, travel, hunting, lumbering, history, inhabitants, business and general conditions.

38. ✠ Canada Part 1 Height of Land and Northern Quebec
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Also Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. Ry.); southeastern Ungava and Keewatin. Sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber, customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

39. ✠ Canada Part 2 Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario
HARRY M. MOORE, Desbarats, Ont., Canada. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, mining, lumbering, agriculture, topography, travel, camping, aviation. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

40. ✠ Canada Part 3 Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario
GEORGE L. CATTON, 94 Metcalfe St., Woodstock, Ont., Canada. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

41. Canada Part 4 Hunters Island and English River District
T. F. PHILLIPS, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn. Fishing, camping, hunting, trapping, canoeing, climate, topography, travel.

42. Canada Part 5 Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta
ED. L. CARSON, Monroe, Wash. Including Peace River district; to Great Slave Lake. Outfits and equipment, guides, big game, minerals, forest, prairie; travel; customs regulations.

43. ✠ Canada Part 6 Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and Northern Keewatin
REECE H. HAGUE, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

44. ✠ Canada Part 7 New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Southeastern Quebec
JAS. F. B. BELFORD, Codrington, Ont., Canada. Hunting, fishing, lumbering, camping, trapping, auto and canoe trips, history, topography, farming, homesteading, mining, paper industry, water-power. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

45. Alaska
THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, Larkspur, Calif. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, back-packing, traction, transport, routes; equipment, clothing, food; physics, hygiene; mountain work.

46. Baffinland and Greenland
VICTOR SHAW, Shaw Mines Corp., Silverton, Colo. Hunting, expeditions, dog-team work, whaling, geology, ethnology (Eskimo).

47. Western U. S. Part 1 Calif., Ore., Wash., Nev., Utah and Ariz.
E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals; mountains.

48. Western U. S. Part 2 New Mexico
H. F. ROBINSON, 200-202 Korber Block, Albuquerque, N. M. Agriculture, automobile routes, Indians, Indian dances, including the snake dance; oil-fields; hunting, fishing, camping; history, early and modern.

49. Western U. S. Part 3 Colo. and Wyo.
FRANK MIDDLETON, 509 Fremont St., Laramie, Wyo. Geography, agriculture, stock-raising, mining, hunting, fishing, trapping, camping and outdoor life in general.

50. Western U. S. Part 4 Mont. and the Northern Rocky Mountains
CHESTER C. DAVIS, Helena, Mont. Agriculture, mining, northwestern oil-fields, hunting, fishing, camping, automobile tours, guides, early history.

51. Western U. S. Part 5 Idaho and Surrounding Country
(Editor to be appointed.) Camping, shooting, fishing,

✠ (Replies addressed envelop with three cents in stamps—in Mr. Beadle's case twelve cents—NOT attached)

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equipment, information on expeditions, outdoor photography, history and inhabitants.

52. **Western U. S. Part 6 Tex. and Okla.**
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Minerals, agriculture, travel, topography, climate, hunting, history, industries.

53. **Middle Western U. S. Part 1 The Dakotas, Neb., Ia., Kan.**
JOSEPH MILLS HANSON (lately Capt. A. E. F.), care *Adventure*. Hunting, fishing, travel. Especially, early history of Missouri Valley.

54. **Middle Western U. S. Part 2 Mo. and Ark.**
JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*. Also the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big-timber sections.

55. **Middle Western U. S. Part 3 Ind., Ill., Mich., Wis., Minn. and Lake Michigan**
JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*. Fishing, clamming, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, early history, legends.

56. **Middle Western U. S. Part 4 Mississippi River**
GEO. A. ZERR, Vine and Hill Sts., Crafton P. O., Ingram, Pa. Routes, connections, itineraries; all phases of river steamer and power-boat travel; history and idiosyncrasies of the river and its tributaries. Questions regarding methods of working one's way should be addressed to Mr. Spears. (*See next section.*)

57. **Eastern U. S. Part 1 Miss., O., Tenn., Michigan and Hudson Valleys, Great Lakes, Adirondacks**
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif. Automobile, motor-cycle, bicycle and pedestrian touring; shanty-boating, river-tripping; outfit suggestions, including those for the transcontinental trails; game, fish and woodcraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs.

58. **Eastern U. S. Part 2 Motor-Boat and Canoe Cruising on Delaware and Chesapeake Bays and Tributary Rivers**
HOWARD A. SHANNON, care of *Adventure*. Motor-boat equipment and management. Oystering, crabbing, eeling, black bass, pike, sea-trout, croakers; general fishing in tidal waters. Trapping and trucking on Chesapeake Bay. Water fowl and upland game in Maryland and Virginia. Early history of Delaware, Virginia and Maryland.

59. **Eastern U. S. Part 3 Marshes and Swamplands of the Atlantic Coast from Philadelphia to Jacksonville**
HOWARD A. SHANNON, care of *Adventure*. Okefinokee and Dismal, Okranoke and the Marshes of Glynn; Croatan Indians of the Carolinas. History, traditions, customs, hunting, modes of travel, snakes.

60. **Eastern U. S. Part 4 Southern Appalachians**
WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, Room 423, Fisk Bldg., Broadway at 57th St., New York. Alleghanies, Blue Ridge, Smokies, Cumberland Plateau, Highland Rim. Topography, climate, timber, hunting and fishing, automobiling, national forests, general information.

61. **Eastern U. S. Part 5 Tenn., Ala., Miss., N. and S. C., Fla. and Ga.**
HAPSBURG LIEBE, Box 432, Orlando, Fla. Except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

62. **Eastern U. S. Part 6 Maine**
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 70 Main Street, Bangor, Me. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

A.—Radio

DONALD MCNICOL, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J. Telegraphy, telephony, history, broadcasting, apparatus, invention, receiver construction, portable sets.

B.—Mining and Prospecting

VICTOR SHAW, Shaw Mines Corp., Silverton, Colo. Territory anywhere on the continent of North America. Questions on mines, mining law, mining, mining methods or practise; where and how to prospect, how to outfit; how to make the mine after it is located; how to work it and how to sell it; general geology necessary for miner or prospector, including the precious and base metals and economic minerals such as pitchblende or uranium, gypsum, mica, cryolite, etc. Questions regarding investment or the merits of any particular company are excluded.

C.—Old Songs That Men Have Sung

A department for collecting hitherto unpublished specimens and for answering questions concerning all songs of the out-of-doors that have had sufficient virility to outlast their immediate day; chanteys, "forebitters," ballads —songs of outdoor men—sailors, lumberjacks, soldiers, cowboys, pioneers; rivermen, canal-men, men of the Great Lakes, voyageurs, railroad men, miners, hoboes, plantation hands, etc.—R. W. GORDON, 1262 Euclid Ave., Berkeley, Calif.

D.—Weapons, Past and Present

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, ammunition and edged weapons. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district.)

1.—**All Shotguns**, including foreign and American makes; wing shooting. JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*.

2.—**All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers**, including foreign and American makes. DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. 3, Lock Box 75, Salem, Ore.

3.—**Edged Weapons, and Firearms Prior to 1800**, Swords, pikes, knives, battle-axes, etc., and all firearms of the flintlock, matchlock, wheel-lock and snaphaunce varieties. LEWIS APPLETON BARKER, 40 University Road, Brookline, Mass.

E.—Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*. Fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting and bait; camping-outfits; fishing-trips.

F.—Tropical Forestry

WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, Room 423, Fisk Bldg., Broadway at 57th St., New York. Tropical forests and forest products; their economic possibilities; distribution, exploration, etc.

G.—Aviation

MAJOR W. G. SCHAUFFLER, JR., General Airways System, Inc., Duryea Bldg., Connecticut Ave. at L. St., Washington, D. C. Airplanes: airships; aeronautical motors; airways and landing fields; contests; Aero Clubs; insurance; aeronautical laws; licenses; operating data; schools; foreign activities; publications. No questions answered regarding aeronautical stock-promotion companies.

H.—Army Matters, United States and Foreign

FRED. F. FLEISCHER, 464 Park Avenue, West New York, N. J. *United States:* Military history, military policy. National Defense Act of 1920. Regulations and matters in general for organized reserves. Army and uniform regulations, infantry drill regulations, field service regulations. Tables of organization. Citizens' military training camps. *Foreign:* Strength and distribution of foreign armies before the war. Uniforms. Strength of foreign armies up to date. History of armies of countries covered by Mr. Fleischer in general, "Ask Adventure" section. *General:* Tactical questions on the late war. Detailed information on all operations during the late war from the viewpoint of the German high command.

I.—STANDING INFORMATION

For **Camp-Fire Stations** write J. COX, care *Adventure*.

For general information on **U. S. and its possessions**, write Supt. of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications. For **U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries**, the Dept. of Com., Wash., D. C.

For the **Philippines, Porto Rico**, and customs receiverships in **Santo Domingo and Haiti**, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dept., Wash., D. C.

For **Alaska**, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For **Hawaii**, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also Dept. of the Interior Wash., D. C.

For **Cuba**, Bureau of Information, Dept. of Agri., Com. and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The **Pan-American Union** for general information on **Latin-American matters** or for specific data. Address L. S. ROWE, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For **R. C. M. P.**, Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs.

For **Canal Zone**, the Panama Canal Com., Wash., D. C.

National **Rifle** Association of America, Brig. Gen. Fred H. Phillips, Jr., Sec'y, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Wash., D. C.

United States **Revolver** Ass'n. W. A. MORRALL, Sec'y-Treas., Hotel Virginia, Columbus, O.

National parks, how to get there and what to do when there. Address National Park Service, Washington, D. C.

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Personal

READERS have been asking for the autobiographies of "Ask Adventure" editors; and those staff members who believe that a few words about themselves will promote better acquaintanceship all around, are responding to the request. The order in which these autobiographies are printed doesn't signify anything. For instance, here's the order of seniority left at the flag by two of our newest men:

New York.

It hardly seems to me that *Adventure* readers would take any interest in the "short and simple annals" of my career, but you're the doctor.

Born in western Pennsylvania, Scotch-Irish and English ancestors. Exposed to an education at Andover and Yale. Spent several years with the U. S. Forest Service in the southern Appalachians, then three as Forest Engineer with a leather company. Am now on my own hook, specializing on travel to Latin America, and on the side dabbling in tropical American forest products.

Very happily married, the daddy of three future football players. Hobbies: Hunting and fishing, camping, amateur gardening. Ambitions: To make American travelers realize the wonders of Latin America, and to live to see the day when the vast unused forest resources of tropical America will come to the rescue of our own waning timber supply. Oh, yes; and to be able to put down on paper the romance of South America.

My greatest adventure to date: A timber-investigative trip in 1919-1920 to Argentine and Paraguay, when I got 1,500 miles up the Parana-Paraguay River,, inland in the Paraguayan Chaco as far as any white man of which there is any record, cruised 200,000 acres of jungle and lived as a nomad with the natives on a diet of *carne y maté* (meat—venison—and Paraguayan tea).

Saludl Amigos del camino.—WM. R. BARBOUR.

New York.

The idea of publishing the autobiographies of "A. A" editors seems to me to be a splendid one, especially so, since you do not insist on having a photograph go along with it.

In accordance with your request, here goes:

Born thirty-five years ago in a small town of the Bohemian Forest. From childhood on was taught to love the great outdoors and spent most of my days in the mountains around my home town. During high school traveled on foot through the Alps, upper Austria, Styria and Tyrol. At college covered the greater part of Europe during vacation time. Graduated from the oldest university on the European continent, that of Prague, in 1909; came out with the degree of A. B., Philology. My father had his heart set on my becoming a member of the select society of naval architects, but I followed the dictates of my heart and studied literature, languages, music and the *beaux arts*.

Aside from this took active part in Bohemian politics, some sort of soap-box orator, during which time I once predicted the ultimate fate of Austria. I failed to impress the authorities, who noted five years ago that I had missed the bull's-eye by only two months. I had stated that Austria would cease to exist in September, 1918. Pretty close at that.

My activities made me *persona non grata* with the Austrian Government, which indicated that my presence behind certain bars would be far better for the welfare of the Kingdom of Bohemia than that in front of others while emphasizing the need of Bohemian independence. In order to oblige them I chose American bars.

Crossed the Pacific to come to a real country in the same year and have been an American in thought, word and deed ever since.

Enlisted in the U. S. Army in 1910 and, with the exception of the greater part of 1914, soldiered for three hitches until 1919. In fact, I still belong to the Army, holding a commission in the Officers' Reserve Corps.

During 1914 I roamed through the islands of the Spanish Main from Cuba to Trinidad and the South American continent from the Isthmus to Argentine.

Naturally I am a firm believer in preparedness. I hold that the United States must have an adequate reserve in order to avoid the mistakes and the costly experiment, both in money and lives, of 1917. The support of the National Defense Act of 1920 has become part of my life's work. The Army has been my first love, and that is never forgotten.

I love good music and good writing. I love horses and dogs. I love the sea and the mountains, the great open spaces, and wish that I could live in Texas, preferably near El Paso. I sympathize with editors and the Chautauqua circuit. (I mean circuit, not circus!)

I detest pacifists, bootleggers, men who kick dogs, cooties, tin-pan-alley, "reds" and the "Tribe of Comstocks."

My creed is this: I believe in the United States, its flag and what it stands for; in mankind and its privileges. I fear God and naught else. I hope for peace and prosperity and pray that our statesmen will keep us out of the "League of Nations."

Being a married man, father of two children, I believe in the 17th amendment, having no other choice. As far as the 18th is concerned, I can not express an opinion, having taken the oath to uphold the constitution of the United States, regardless of the consequences to mine.

My greatest ambition is to look a certain official into his monocled eye and tell him, "I told you so"—and I have helped to fulfill my prophecy.—FRED F. FLEISCHER.

Traipsing around the Philippines

GOLD has been found there before. Why not again?

Question:—"Please find enclosed a self-addressed envelop as I wish some information concerning an island in the Phillippines. I was in Luzon for three and one-half years and can speak the native lingo and also Spanish.

What uninhabited island is out of the commerce line?

I wish to prospect for gold and also pearls.

A large island is not necessary.

If you know such an island would you please send me the location and how to get there from Manila.

How much money would be needed?

And what equipment would be needed for a

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two years' stay?"—RAIMONDO EDUARDO, Council Bluffs, Ia.

Answer, by Mr. Connor:—There is no uninhabited island in the Philippine group. There are several islands that lie adjacent to the larger ones, and are visited daily by people from the mainlands to till the soil, cut hemp, gather copra, etc.

When the islands were purchased following the Spanish-American War two small islands, that lay between the island of Jolo (Sulu) and British North Borneo (Sandakan), were not included in the treaty, but a separate treaty was signed and an additional purchase price of $2,000,000 was paid for them. Otherwise no other islands in the group answer to your inquiry.

These smaller islands can be reached by the native proa or outrigger boats. Small schooners (*lorchas*) ply in the inter-island trade, and their fare is very reasonable.

Gold has been discovered in small quantities in Mindanao and Luzon. Pearls are fished for in southern Mindanao and Jolo.

Should you desire to go south the best route would be to engage passage on one of the inter-island steamship lines that run out of the port of Manila.

Your transportation to Manila would stand you $375 (not to speak of tips to stewards, etc.) and from there on it would be determined by the class of passage you would engage south, and also by the equipment you would have.

Your equipment for a two years' stay (supposing you were to live in the interior, which in Mindanao and Jolo is not a safe thing to do) would consist of cots, cooking-utensils, light clothing, shoes (Army type is the best) blankets, the prospector's pick, a gold-pan, etc. Lots of quinin, and disease preventives in quantities.

The full statement of the sections, as given in this issue, is printed only in alternate issues.

Hunting, Trapping, Prospecting in New Mexico

ALL regulated, of course, just as they are nearly everywhere else in the United States:

Question:—"Am writing to you for some information on hunting and trapping in New Mexico. To begin with, where is the best section for hunting, and what kind of game is there? Is it necessary to have State hunting-license to hunt and trap in the Forest Reserves? Do I have to have a permit from the ranger, and if so, what is the cost of one?

Have had some experience trapping and have roughed it some, but never on such an extended trip.

Would it be advisable to buy our outfits in a large town, or wait until we are in the field? By that I mean articles that could be bought cheaper in a city.

Would it be possible for us to prospect a little next Spring? What are the mining laws regarding prospecting in the reserves? Would certainly appreciate any additional information you may be able to give me.

If this is published in the magazine, please withhold my name."—R. D. C., Brownsville, Tex.

Answer, by Mr. Robinson:—For information on hunting and trapping: I have prepared a digest of the fishing and hunting laws of the State with a little other information, which I enclose.

For hunting the predatory animals it is probable that the best place in the State would be in the Black Range or in the Datil Mountains in the southwestern part of the State, although some game of all kinds may be found in the Sangre de Christo Mountains in Santa Fé and Taos Counties in the north-central part of the State.

There is no additional cost for hunting-licenses on the Forest Reserves.

I can not say that New Mexico is a very good part of the country in which to hunt for profit. If you want sport and perhaps a little income from what few predatory-animal furs you might get, you can find it here, but frankly if you want to hunt for profit I can not give you much encouragement.

The Biological Survey sometimes put on hunters to help clean up the predatory animals, and you might do something in that line. The Survey should be addressed at Washington to determine whether they are in need of hunters or not.

There is plenty of mineral in New Mexico, and there is always the chance of getting something worth while. It is now permitted to prospect on Indian reservations as well as on the Forest Reserves. If you wanted to go on either of these classes of reserves, you should write to the supervisor in care of the forests, and to the superintendent in charge of the Indian reservations for permits for that particular reserve. If you care to write to any particular one and will indicate which one, I will be pleased to send you the name and address of the man in charge.

Should you decide to try either the hunting or the prospecting, you can buy your outfits on the ground practically as cheaply as away, and you will better know what you want after you visit the section you want to try out.

White Man and Native of West Africa

HAUSAS—trading-factory terms—marriage ceremonies and customs:

Question:—"I am writing to get some information in regard to the customs, habits, etc., of the natives of that part of Africa which is included in your section in 'Ask Adventure.'

1. Are the natives of a war-like stock? That is, did they come from a fighting race?

2. How much authority does the superintendent of a trading-post possess?

3. Do the whites interfere with the natives in dealing with native criminals?

4. What are some of the punishments of native wrong-doers by the whites? By the natives themselves?

5. What are some marriage customs among the natives? Am I right in supposing a native has full power to punish his wife in any way he pleases?

6. Have the morals of the African natives been raised by the rule of the white men or have they decreased in standard?

7. Is the ceremony of Mum-Jumbo—or something of some name like that—for the correcting of

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disobedient women used in that part of Africa? If so, how is it carried out?

8. What is the customary costume of the natives?

I apologize for asking so many questions, but I am very much interested in Africa.

If by any chance this letter should be published in *Adventure*, please do not print my name."—R. E. H., Cross Plains, Texas.

Answer, by Mr. Simpson:—Although your questions, are, for the greater part, too general for full treatment in a letter, I'll try to do my best for you, taking each question on its merits as it comes along.

1. The natives of West Africa, in the number of their tribes, are as the proverbial sands of the sea. Some of them are fighters, some are just ugly and mean, and others are just living along and making as little fuss about it as the law and the climate allow. Generally speaking, the soldiers and police in the several colonies along the coast are mostly Hausa and Yoruba, although in Sierra Leone and Gambia I understand Bambaras, Mandingos, Susus and others are enlisted.

The Hausa is *the* fighting man of West Africa. He is also, by the same token, the greatest trader; fighting and trading, particularly in the "old days," having just naturally gone hand in hand. Heinrich Barth claims they are the Atarantians of Herodotus. Barth's "Travels in North and Central Africa" or C. H. Robinson's "Hausaland" is authoritative reading on the subject.

2. The superintendent or agent of a trading-factory used to have the same authority as the captain of a ship. Originally they were ship captains, and the traditions of the old ship trading-days became part and parcel of the later trading-factory life. Remnants of these traditions are still to be found in the fact that the floor is called the "deck," the kitchen the "galley," the houseboys "stewards," the agent the "captain," the dining-room the "saloon," and on the majority of Oil Rivers factories a ship's bell keeps a man informed of the passing of time, just as on ship-board.

With the advent of the Government the trading agent's authority naturally became curtailed, the law of the land passing into the hands of the district commissioner; but he still retains sufficient authority to make it very uncomfortable for any one—white or black—in his employ whom he doesn't happen to like. But his czardom, except on isolated stations, isn't quite the empire it used to be.

3. Technically the white Government deals with native criminals when it catches them. But the native chief, if he feels anxious enough to mete out his own conception of punishment for an offense against his dignity or person, still manages to keep any little private grudges of the sort out of the Government's hands.

4. The principal form of punishment by the whites for the most prevalent offense on the part of the native—namely, stealing—is flogging. This was one of the trading agent's privileges, and I've known of several who liked to stand and watch the thing done.

There was a native court in Warri, Nigeria, composed of a jury of native chiefs and presided over by a white commissioner, which carried out the letter of the law upon offenders according to the nature of the offense; and these courts are dotted all over West Africa, wherever a commissioner is stationed. On the Gold Coast they have traveling commissioners who, like circuit judges, go about dealing out justice as best they can. As at Warri, all the principal centers of Government have a fairly good jail for the accommodation of convicted criminals, and so that they won't be likely to run away, they form them into chain-gangs and put them to loading ships, keeping the walks and the lawns tidy, or any other little odd jobs that happen to be lying around. Capital offenders, after a trial, are hanged on the nearest mango-tree.

5. Every tribe has its own kind of marriage ceremony, so I won't attempt to go into that. Marriage, broadly speaking, is a purchase-and-sale proposition. A man buys as many wives as he can afford, and those he doesn't happen to like he can simply "put away." And that's that. If, however, a wife should be proven unfaithful, he can in some instances get his money back from the father. Some of the marriage ceremonies are quite elaborate, involving "blood bonds" and all sorts of paraphernalia.

I would not say that a native has full power to punish his wife in any way he pleases; but he can, particularly if he is a chief, make it desperately uncomfortable for her without much interference from anywhere. And it takes a lot of brutality to make a West African wife even slightly uneasy.

6. This is a question which involves a discussion on the subject of whether a higher standard of living naturally produces a higher standard of morality. And as far as West Africa is concerned, my inclination is to refuse to be interviewed. I do not think any native anywhere has been improved morally by contact with the white man—not in the first hundred years at least. And it will take a much longer time than that for the West African native to learn to emulate the white man's good qualities instead of the other kind.

7. Mumbo-Jumbo is of East African origin, and is said to be a fantastic idol or image worshiped by certain tribes, some of whom use it as a kind of bogy man; and it came to be used in reference to any object of superstitious reverence or fear. If there is any particular form of wifely discipline in connection with it, I never heard of it.

8. The costume of the West African native varies according to place and education. But, leaving out the Mohammedan groups of northern Nigeria, the average costume is a loin-cloth plus an overcloth of print or madras, which hangs from the waist in the case of men and from under the arms in the case of women.

I think that's all.

Free service, but don't ask us to pay the postage to get it to you.

Fort Bridger and the Ames Monument

SECOND permanent settlement in Wyoming:

Question:—"Am greatly interested in the history of our West and especially of Wyoming. The State Historical Society can furnish but vague information concerning one point; *i. e.*, Fort Bridger. I saw it in 1918 and have been eager for all the details of its history.

Were the Mormons involved in any way in massacre or depredations in that region?

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When was the post abandoned; why?

To whom should one apply for privilege of camping within the enclosure, or bunking in the well-preserved log cabins? This last I tried to determine from the villagers, but they were as clams.

Again, can you give me a bit of information concerning a great monument I saw—like a pyramid—on the Lincoln Highway between Cheyenne and Laramie?

Can you refer me to any books giving light on either of these subjects?

I am not writing this for publication. However, your answers may be of vital interest to others."—CLAIRE SINGLETON, El Paso, Tex.

Answer, by Mr. Middleton:—Am afraid the information I can furnish will prove rather vague also, although you may be able to glean a few facts that are new to you from the following:

In the latter '50s a number of outrages were committed upon emigrant trains, and some of these outrages were attributed to the Mormons. In 1857 trouble arose between Brigham Young and other Territorial officials who had been appointed by President Buchanan. Brigham Young was at that time Territorial Governor of Utah, and it was apparent that the Mormon Church was determined to rule the Territory. Instructions from Washington were disregarded, and in some instances Brigham Young openly defied the U. S. authorities.

In the Fall of 1857 the Government started an expedition to Utah from Fort Leavenworth, and much concern was felt among the settlers of the West that the Mormons would retaliate by sending companies of the Danites, or Angels, against the frontier settlements. These fears, however, proved groundless. The Mormons harassed the expedition to quite an extent, burning wagon-trains, etc., but did not trouble the settlers. When Col. Albert Sidney Johnston, who was in charge of the expedition, reached Salt Lake, Brigham Young was removed as governor and the worst of the trouble was over. However, it seems that the Mormons were accused in some instances at least, of passing along information to the Indians for them to use against white settlers and immigrant trains.

In the year of 1842 James Bridger and one Benito Vasquez established a trading-post on the Green River and gave it the name of Fort Bridger. This was made the second permanent settlement in Wyoming. This post was several times attacked by Indians, one of the most disastrous occurring in August, 1843. The fort was surrounded by a number of Shoshone Indian lodges, this tribe being on friendly terms with the old trader and his partner. While the men were absent on an antelope hunt a party of Cheyenne and Arapahos made a raid on the place, killed several squaws and ran off a herd of ponies. They were pursued by the Shoshones, who recovered the ponies and killed several of the Cheyennes and Arapahos.

In 1854 Bridger sold his fort to the Mormons for $8,000. The next year the Mormons built a boulder wall fourteen feet high, enclosing a space one hundred feet square, and changed the name to Fort Supply. When Col. Johnston's expedition reached this place in 1857 the Mormons evacuated it.

When Col. Johnston moved on to Salt Lake he left Col. Hoffman at Fort Bridger with a detachment of troops. Col. Hoffman erected a number of buildings, and the Government then established a military post there and gave it the old name of Fort Bridger. A garrison was maintained there for about thirty years. In May, 1861, Col. Cook sold Government supplies there to the Mormons and left the post in charge of an orderly sergeant.

Shortly afterward the Indians began to get threatening toward the emigrants and a detachment of U. S. cavalry was sent to Fort Bridger. During the next three years these soldiers were kept busy guarding the mails, escorting wagon-trains and holding in check the hostile Indians in the vicinity. In the Fall of 1867 five companies of soldiers were stationed at Bridger to protect surveyors and the construction camps of the Union Pacific Railroad.

Early in the Summer of 1868 a treaty was concluded with the chiefs of the Shoshone and Bannock tribes by which they relinquished all their lands in Wyoming except the reservation in the Wind River Valley. After the treaty, a portion of the garrison was removed to other posts, and for a number of years only a small garrison was maintained there, and it was finally abandoned entirely about 1890.

As the post has been abandoned by the Government, I shouldn't think it would be necessary to have permission to camp there. However, if this is the case write to the Adjutant-General, State Capitol Building, Cheyenne, Wyoming, asking him for a written permit, and if this is consistent I am sure he will not hesitate to grant you the privilige.

The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company of Chicago have published a very complete history of Wyoming, in three volumes. I think that in Vol. 1 you will find much that will interest you concerning early history of not only Wyoming, but also of other States and of early times on the Oregon Trail, and the Pony Express, etc., etc.

Having recently had occasion to be near the monument you inquire of, I made it a point to visit the place.

The monument is sixty feet square at its base, and seventy feet in height. It was erected by friends of two brothers, Oliver and Oakes Ames, who were very instrumental in the building of the Union Pacific Railroad, having stepped in at a time when matters were in a crucial state. It bears the inscription, "In Memory of Oliver and Oakes Ames." The brothers passed away in 1873 and 1877 respectively.

The monument as it now stands was on the old main line of the Union Pacific, and was erected on the highest point on the system. Since then, however, the Sherman Tunnel has been built, and the main line passes through this at a point some three miles south of the monument. The monument stands nearly a mile south of the Lincoln Highway; can be reached readily by auto from the highway, and undoubtedly causes much wonderment and comment from passing autoists.

There is a small cemetery of eight graves at a point about one hundred yards northwest of the monument. People whom I have inquired of, do not seem to know anything of the history of these graves. Some of the head-boards are still standing, and bear dates of from 1862 to 1868.

If you don't want an answer enough to enclose full return postage to carry it, you don't want it.

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Hawaiian Music

NEITHER tunes nor the distinctive instruments on which they are played are indigenous:

Question:—"I would like for you to give me some information on the origin of Hawaiian music. Who invented the Hawaiian guitar, also the ukelele? When was their music originally started in the islands?"—GARRETT ROCKFORD, Indianapolis, Ind.

Answer, by Mr. Halton:—Prior to the advent of the missionaries in 1820 Hawaii could not be said to have any music as we know it. You will note that all Hawaiian music is based on old hymns.

The guitar is not a Hawaiian instrument; but the method of drawing a steel bar over the strings was first used by a Hawaiian-Chinese named Kehuku some years ago to give it that plaintive tone. The ukelele was invented by a Portuguese named Nunes about thirty-five years ago soon after he arrived in the islands from Portugal as a sugar-plantation laborer.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

UNCLAIMED mail is held by Adventure for the following persons, who may obtain it by sending us present address and proof of identity.

ADDLEMAN, FRANK C.; Aldridge, F. P.; Bailey, Dick; Baptiste, Jean; Balensiefer, Frank A. W.; Barrett, Raymond; Bertsch, Elizabeth; Beverley, C. S.; Bishop, L. S.; Blaicher, Chas. A.; Bonner, Major J. S.; Boss, Mrs.; Brown, Mrs. W. E.; Bryson, Clarence F.; Buckley, Ray; Buetin, F. W.; Butterfield, M. E.; Bryon, J.; Bushby, Edward F.; Carr, John; Carpenter, Capt. Robert S.; Cassidy, Edward A.; Center, Jack; Chartrand, A.; "Chink"; Clark, Wilfred J.; Cochran, George R.; Coles, Bobby; Corbett, Fred P.; Coleman, J. U.; Connor, A. M.; Cook, Eliott, D.; Cook, Wm. N.; Corporal; Courtland, Victor; Crozier, W. Al.; Dalton, Fred; Davis; De Brisac, Ricardo; Dennis, F. C.; Donovan, Anna Lyle; Dunn, Ed; Edwards, Edgar; Erwin, Phil.; Ford, Harry; Possum, Ralph; Franklin, R.; Fisher, Sgt. R.; Gale, Geo. A.; Garson, Ed.; Grahame, Arthur W.; Green, L. E.; Grimm, H. C.; Gunn, P. R.; Hailstorm, Chief; Harriss, Walter J.; Haskins, S. S.; Hooker, Wm. P.; Hughes, Frank E.; Hunt, Daniel O'Connell; Iverson, Geo. L.; Jackson, R. R.; James, Don; Kelly, C. H.; Kennedy, Paul I.; Kuckaby, Wm. Francis; Lang, Algot; Larssay, Jack; La Sonn, Fred W. Mrs.; Lee, Wm. R.; Lekki, Michael; Lovett, Harold S.; Linihan, Robert F.; McAdams, W. B.: McGovern, J. V.; McKee, A. L.; McLane, A.; McNair, Henry S.; Mackintosh, D. T. A.; MacDonald, James; May, E. C.; Miller, Walter; Minor, John; Molitor, Joseph; Moore, Robert; Nelson, F. L.; Nichols, Chas. B.; Nylander, Towne J.; O'Hara, Jack; Overton, C. H.; Parker, G. A.; Parrott, D. C.; Phillips, Buffington; Phillips, F. R.; Pigeon, A. M.; Posner, Geo. A.; Pulis, H. F.; Raines, Wm. L.; Rich, Bob Wagner; Raymond, C. E.; Rogan, Chas. B.; Rutherford, May; Ruff, Harold A.; Ryder, H. S.; Ryan, J.; Schafer, Geo.; Schmidt, Geo.; Serville, Mrs. A. L.; Sloan, Ch. A.; Simonds, Frank W.; Smith, C. O.; Smith, Mrs. Kenneth; Starr, Ted; Stewart, E. J.; Stevens, Albert A. Mrs.; Stocking, C. B.; Stonway, James; Strong, Mr.; St. Clair, Fred; Sullivan, Walter; Sweeney, J. E.; Tripp, Ed.; Thaster, Kenneth; Van Tyler, Chester; Varner, C. W.; Von Gelacke, Byron; Ward, Frank B.; Warren, C. Chester; Watkins, E. V.; Watson, Elmo Scott; Williams, Grover; Woeller, Erich; Williams, Frank S.; Mendelson, Alick.

MISCELLANEOUS—R. E. H.; Shorty; W. S-X. V.; 348; C. C. C.; H. V. S.; T. W. S.; "Lonely Jack;" 2480; S-177284; J. C. H.; 398; W. A. H.

PLEASE send us your present address. Letters forwarded to you at the address given do not reach you.—Address MORIN TUDURY, care of *Adventure.*

O'CONNOR, JOHN. Resident of Medina, N. Y. Last heard from in 1888 when he was participating in the gold rush near Dawson City, Alaska. He was about five feet five, weight about one hundred sixty pounds, light complexion, dark brown hair and eyes, age about sixty-three years. Any information will be appreciated.—Address JOSEPH F. CANTILLON, 381 Summer St., Buffalo, N. Y.

O'CONNOR, STEPHEN. Resident of Medina, N. Y. Last heard from when he left Medina in 1899 to enlist for the Spanish-American war. He was a full-fledged molder. He was about five feet eight inches, weight about one hundred forty pounds, blue eyes, light complexion and light brown hair. Age about fifty-six years. Any information will be appreciated.—Address JOSEPH F. CANTILLON, 381 Summer St., Buffalo, N. Y.

SCHECTER, S. M. Formerly employed by Jewish Immigration Society, Montreal, Canada. Any information will be appreciated by MONTREAL COMMERCIAL TRUST, 17 St. James St., Montreal, Canada.

MARTIN, NEELY. Please write to your mother.—Address MRS. B. MARTIN, Gen. Del. San Francisco, Calif.

CANFIELD, MARY and CHARLES. Were in St. Joseph's Home, N. Y. C. Charles was sent to live with a Mrs. Salmon, Butler, N. J. in 1904. Age about twenty-eight years. Mary was sent up State. Age thirty years. Any information will be appreciated.—Address MRS. CATHERINE NAGLE, 303 E. 39th St., N. Y. C.

SHEEHAN, MARVIN. Left his home in Oregon, Ill. about a month ago. Father is ill. Any information will be appreciated by his half-brother.—Address HOWARD STUFFER, 517 N. 4th St., Oregon, Ill.

DAKERS, C. C., Scotchman. Was on farm in Edray, West Virginia in 1911. Last seen in Toronto, in 1914, headed for Western States. Write to mother or sister at home, or—Address REV. CHAS. P. HOLBROOK, Southern Pines, North Carolina.

URETA, RAUL MORALES. Ureta is mother's name. Chilean. Last heard of in New York in 1916. Age twenty-eight. Any information will be appreciated by his 'amily and me.—Addres R. A. BRETT, Bernice, La. Also send duplicate correspondence to DON CARLOS COSTABAL, C., MIRAFLORES 175, Santiago, Chile.

SLY, GEORGE. Last heard from in Spokane, Washington in 1907. Is a teamster. Please write to your old friend.—Address L. T. 456, Care of *Adventure.*

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DAVIDSON, ALEXANBER. (Sandy) Last known address care of Chas. R. Smith, R. No. 2, Box 36, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. His sister has taken a farm and needs him.—Address MRS. DOUGLAS RITCHIE, 1238 25th St., Detroit, Mich.

HARGUS, CLAUDE. Age twenty-six years, brown hair, brown eyes, six feet tall and dark complexion. Advertisement appeared in this magazine for him about two years ago. Was then residing at 601 Lafayette St., Bridgeport, Conn., later worked for C. V. Easton, Ossining, N. Y. Any information will be appreciated by his mother and sister.—Address ADDIE PRINCE, Jefferson City, Tenn.

WONDERLY, GEORGE W. (Scotty) Left his home in Chester, Pa. about five years ago. Last heard from in San Diego, Calif. about three years ago. Age forty-seven years. Any information will be appreciated by his brother. —Address FRANK J. WONDERLY, 225 Engle St., Chester, Pa.

SLIWINSKI, STANLEY J. Resident of St. George, Staten Island. Last known to be working for City Hospital, Welfare Island. Any information will be appreciated.—Address JOSEPH H. A. SMITH, Gen. Delivery, Salt Lake City, Utah.

LAMBERT. Contractor in Montreal, Quebec. Any information will be appreciated.—Address MONTREAL COMMERCIAL TRUST, 17 St. James St., Montreal, Canada.

THE following have been inquired for in either the Nov. 20th or Dec. 10 issues of Adventure. They can get the name and address of the inquirer from this magazine.

ANSELL, EDWARD CLARENCE; Ashton, George H.; Avelerson, Charles Henry; Bagby, Oliver Halbert; Beyer, Louis; Briggs, W. S.; Byron, William; Celentano, D. (Celly); Cooper, James; Courtland, Goodwin; Culberston, L. Carroll; Fuller, Charles; Garlick, Clyde W.; Haney, Lillian and Jack; Herbert, Frank; Johnson, Toeodore (Toady); Kane, Thomas C.; Lawrence, Joseph Simon; Leask, Thomas; Mack, Joseph F.; Miller, Floyd Chester; Renner, Walter J.; Scott, R. E. or Estill; Semple, James Lithgow; Smythe, Arnold; Snowden, E.; Spinks, John L.; Tankersley or Tankushy, Isaac; Trask, Willard; Verney, Joe; Welson, Charles; Whitmore, I. W.; Wilderman, Arthur.

MISCELLANEOUS—C. B. Geo.; Would like to hear from the old timers that hit the trails up the Republican River or Platte or Old Missouri Rivers, up Fort Bend; Would like to hear from any of the members of Hope of Gloster Lodge, No. M195 and Rorkes Drift Lodge, No. M181, I. O. G. T. that met at the Soldiers' Home on Canton Road, Tien Tsin, N. China in 1914.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

JANUARY 10TH ISSUE, 1924

The next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

MIDSUMMER NIGHT A Complete Novelette
A life-time in twenty-four hours on the Marne. *Leonard H. Nason*

THE LOOM OF LIES A Complete Novelette
John Fann willed the ranch to his cowboys. *W. C. Tuttle*

THE LONG KNIVES A Five-Part Story Part II *Hugh Pendexter*
Indian-fighting along the Ohio in 1793.

FISHERMAN'S FURY A Complete Novelette *Karl W. Detzer*
Trailed by his enemies, *Captain Clarke* sails through the storm with his belt of gold.

TROUBLE IN COMPANY D A Complete Novelette *Conroy Kroder*
The gold-call leads to mutiny in the Philippines.

THE ROPE OF PEDRO MENDEZ *Gordon MacCreagh*
The peon made it for his llamas, but it bore the weight of men.

OOD *John Eyton*
A young otter learns that there are waters—friendly and otherwise.

ENOUGH ROPE *Clements Ripley*
It looked like "a nasty automobile accident."

ACCORDING TO HOYLE *John Webb*
"One-two Mac" knew all about cards.

THROUGH FIRE *Raymond S. Spears*
A fire, a man—and a question of ethics.

Still Farther Ahead

IN THE three issues following the next there will be *long stories* by Arthur D. Howden Smith, Frederick J. Jackson, Barry Scobee, J. D. Newsom, Harold Lamb, Thomson Burtis, Charles Victor Fischer, Arthur O. Friel, Garrard Harris, Hugh Pendexter and Harold Golder; and short stories by Clements Ripley, Conroy Kroder, F. St. Mars, George E. Holt, John Eyton, William Harper Dean, Sidney Herschel Small, Thomas Topham, William Byron Mowery and others—stories of Japan, the jungle, the Amazon, the cattle country, Asia Minor, the frontier, Morocco, the South Seas, the oil-fields, the Philippines, the high seas, the War, the Gulf, pirates, cowboys, vikings, Indians, soldiers, sailors; of adventurers all the world around.

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